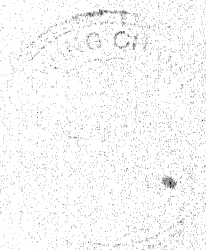


THE  
LIFE OF TOLSTOY  
LATER YEARS

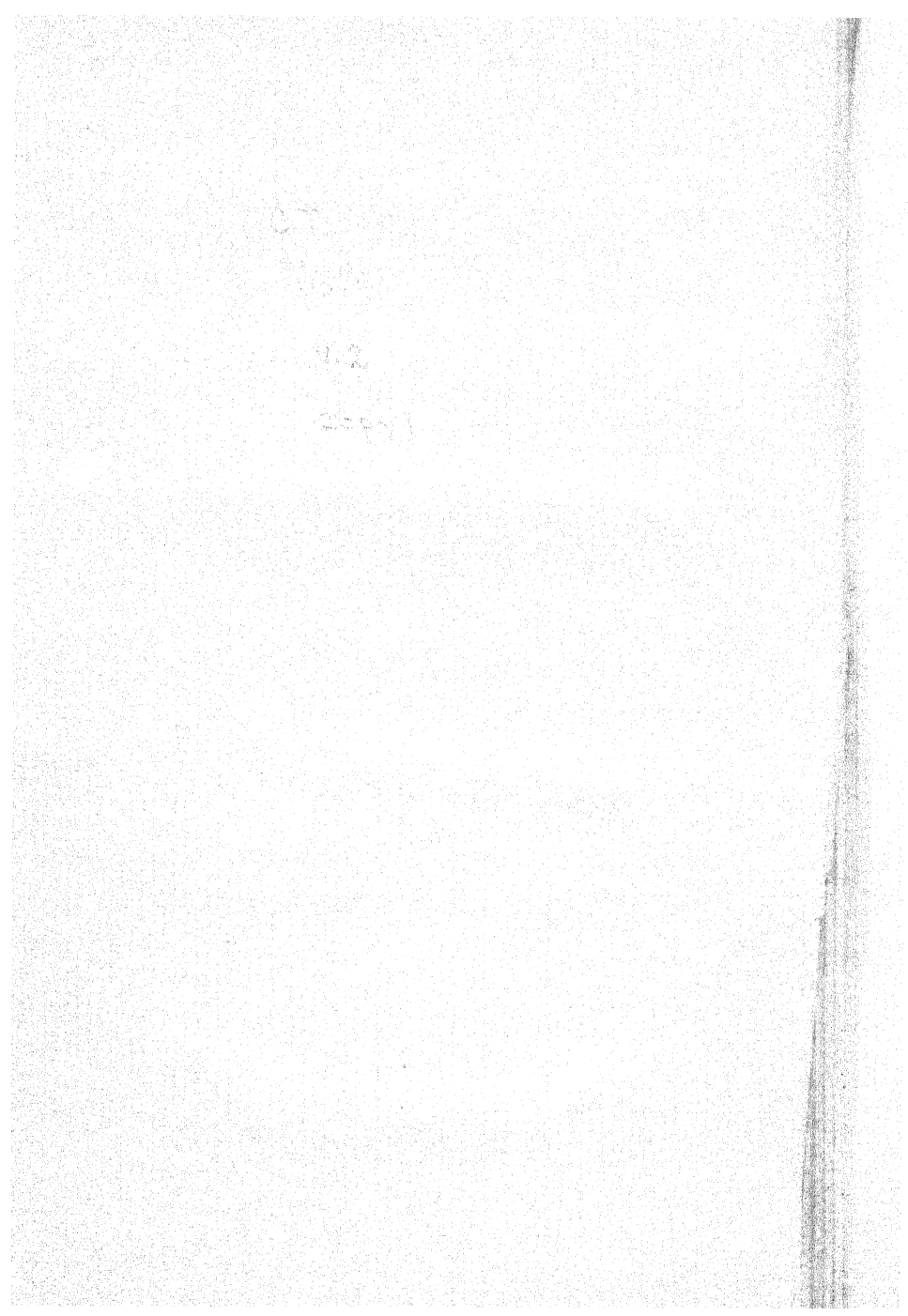
BY  
AYLMER MAUDE

SEVENTH EDITION

NEW YORK  
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY  
1917

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## PREFACE

IN this edition I have made a few slight alterations in the text, and have added an account of Tolstoy's last illness and death. But the reader should please bear in mind that all but the last two dozen pages of the book were written and published while Tolstoy was still alive.

With reference to the statement of his religious views he wrote to me :

'I have just read your presentation of my religious views, and have found it quite good. Here and there I have pencilled remarks on it. It is for you to decide whether you agree with them and accept them.' They were all adopted.

'For my own part, I repeat that the presentation of the whole is very good, and I heartily thank you for it.'

That the events of his life as set forth in this volume are accurate, is guaranteed by the fact that his wife, the Countess S. A. Tolstoy, most kindly rendered me the very valuable assistance of reading and correcting it, chapter by chapter.

The material collected in the Russian edition of Birukóf's Biography of Tolstoy (which as yet reaches only to the year 1884) was of great use to me in writing this book. On several important matters our conclusions differ, but that in no way diminishes my obligation to him.

Of the other numerous sources from which I have drawn, acknowledgment is made at the end of each chapter.

▼

Throughout the book I have aimed at explaining Tolstoy's views clearly and sympathetically, and have done my best to point out what is true and valuable in them; but when necessary I have not shrunk from frankly expressing dissent; and in so doing I have but trodden in his footsteps, for he never forgot the duty of frankness and sincerity which an author owes to his readers. That was one of the qualities which caused him to be so widely respected and so deeply loved.

AYLMER MAUDE.

GREAT BADDOW, CHELMSFORD,

*16th May 1911.*

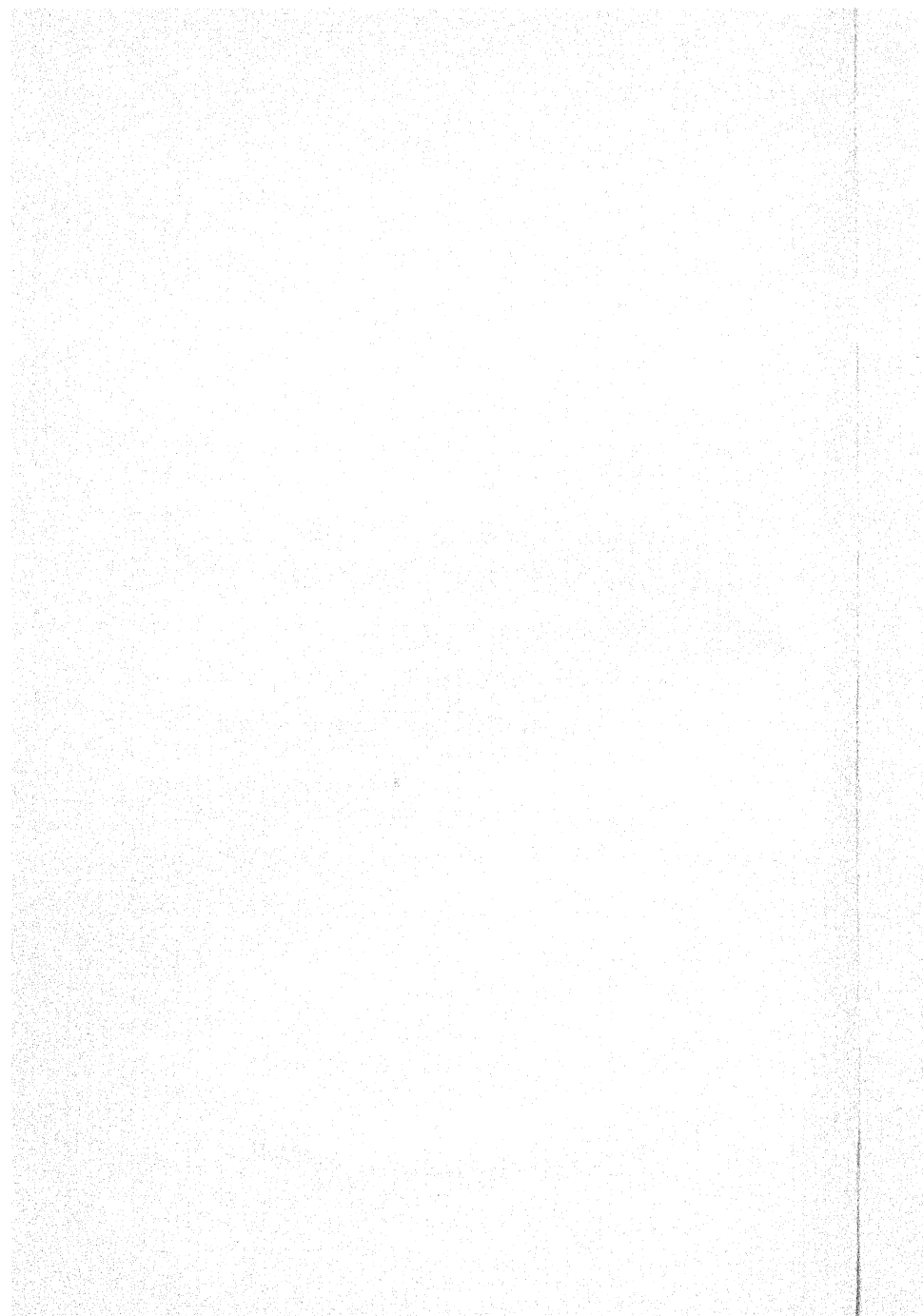
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## CHAPTER I

### THE TRANSITION STAGE

Change of outlook. Writings. [1878] Renan's *Life of Jesus*. Recommences Diary. Letter to Countess. V. I. Alexéyef and Orthodoxy. [1879] Strain on health. Letters to Fet. Talks with pilgrims. Slavophilism. Visits Kief. Fasting. Anti-Church writings. Skóbelef and Verestchágin. *War and Peace* in French. [1880] The Póúshkin Celebration. Tourgénéf at Yásnaya. Prince L. D. Ourousof. Prose Poems. Dostoyévsky. Tourgénéf, and Tolstoy's new views. Religious works unpublishable. Helps peasants.

HAVING reached a fresh understanding of life, Tolstoy felt, he tells us, as though while walking from home he had suddenly understood that the errand he had started upon was unnecessary, and had turned back. All that had formerly been on his right hand now appeared on his left, and all that had been on his left was now on his right. What he had desired : honour, riches, and self-aggrandisement—now seemed evil ; while poverty, humility, self-sacrifice and the service of others seemed good.

Those who have followed his earlier career will find it hard to detect the external signs of so great and sudden a change. The stories and novels he had previously written foreshadowed the views he now preached ; and his work in the schools at Yásnaya had pointed practically in the same direction. No sudden break was apparent in his external life : what followed, evolved from what had gone before ; so that it seems less natural to speak of his



crossing the Rubicon, than of his gradual ascent of a mountain.

His works, however, clearly indicate that at this time a profound change occurred. His stories written before his *Confession* are works of observation. He had watched life, and seen the workings of his own mind with marvellous clearness, and remembered it all to the smallest details with extraordinary accuracy. Those earlier stories almost always centred in himself. Nikólenka Irténef in *Youth*; Nehlúdoof in *A Squire's Morning*, *A Billiard Marker's Memoirs*, and *Lucerne*; Olénin in *The Cossacks*; Pierre (and to some extent Prince Andréy) in *War and Peace*, as well as Lévin in *Anna Karénina*, were all to a large extent Tolstoy himself. He had not felt sufficiently sure about things, nor had he possessed any sufficiently clear chart of life, to abandon the coast-lines familiar to him and steer right out into the ocean. But after he had found or framed his religion and drawn his map of life—after what we may call his Conversion—he wrote differently. Much of his work then became professedly didactic, and was merely incidentally artistic; and even the stories, novels, and plays he produced, from *Iván Ilyúch* to *Resurrection*, differed from his previous ones. They were no longer self-centred works of observation, but rather experimental studies illustrating the operation of certain moral forces. He lost none of his artistic power of causing his readers to share his feelings, his technical cunning remained undiminished, and his work was always marvellously true to life—but its centre of gravity had shifted.

This change does not yet show itself in the fragments of *The Decembrists*, which he wrote a little before 1878 (his second and third attempts at that abortive novel) nor in the fragmentary *First Recollections*, from which I have quoted freely, and which was written about this time.

His *Confession*, written at about this time, was not finally completed till later; but as it narrates his mental

struggles in the years 1874-78, I have already dealt with it when writing of those years.

In the spring of 1878 Tolstoy read Renan's *Life of Jesus*, and what he wrote about it to his friend N. N. Stráhof, who had given him the book, throws light upon his own attitude towards the study that was to be his chief occupation during the next few years: 1878

To-day I fasted, and read the Gospels and Renan's *Life of Jesus*. I read it through, and wondered at you [who admired it] all the time I was reading. . . . If Renan has any thoughts of his own, they are the two following: (1) that Christ did not know *l'évolution et le progrès*, and in this respect Renan tries to correct him, and criticises him from the height of that conception. . . . But if Christian truth is high and deep, it is so only because it is subjectively absolute. . . . (2) Renan's other new thought is that as Christian teaching exists, there must have been a man of some kind behind it, and this man certainly sweated and obeyed nature's calls. For us, all human, demeaning, realistic details have vanished from the life of Jesus, for the same reason that all details about all Jews and others who ever lived have vanished, as all vanishes that is not eternal. In other words, the sand that was not wanted has been washed away by an unalterable law, and the gold has remained. One would think the only thing, therefore, was to accept the gold. But no! Renan says. If there is gold, there must have been sand; and he tries to rediscover the sand; and does it all with an air of profundity! But what would be yet more amusing, were it not so horribly stupid, is that he does not even find any sand, but only declares that it must have been there. I read it all, and searched long, and asked myself: Well, what new thing have you learnt from these historical details? . . . And if you recall them, you will confess that you learnt nothing, simply nothing. . . . It may be that to know a plant, one has to know its surroundings; or even that to know man as a political animal, one must know his surroundings and growth and development; but to understand beauty, truth and goodness, no study of surroundings will help, or has anything in

common with the matter under consideration. In the one case, things go along a level; in the other, they go in quite a different direction: up and down. Moral truth may and can be studied, nor is there any end to its study; but as carried on by religious people it goes deep, while this study of Renan's is merely a childish, trivial and mean prank.

In other words, Tolstoy considered that in the Gospels we can find absolute truth; and that to understand them it is not necessary to undertake any minute study of the conditions of time and place in which Jesus lived. We shall see, later on, how this view affected his own work.

That summer he again began to keep a Diary, after having discontinued it for nearly thirteen years; and the very first entry, on 22nd May 1878, relates to the religious questions that now filled his mind.

I went to Mass on Sunday, and could find a meaning that satisfied me in the whole service, except that 'vanquish his enemies' is blasphemy. A Christian should pray for his enemies, not against them.

On 5th June follows an entry which reveals the closeness of his observation of Nature:

A hot midday. 2 o'clock. I walk in the rich, high meadow-grass. Quiet, and sweet and strong scent of St. John's Wort and clover surrounds me and intoxicates. In the strath, towards the wood, the grass is yet higher, and the same intoxication reigns; the paths in the wood smell like a conservatory.

Immense plane leaves. By the cut timber, a bee gathers honey from one after another of a cluster of yellow flowers. From the thirteenth, humming, it flies away, full.

That day Tolstoy caught a bad cold, and was ill for a week. Then he went to Samára, taking the elder children with him. The Countess, with the younger ones, joined him there somewhat later in the summer. In a letter written while going down the Vólga, he says:

I am again writing on board the same steamer. The children are well and asleep, and have been good. It is ten o'clock at night, and to-morrow at four, all being well, we shall be at Samára, and shall reach the farm by evening. To-day has again passed quietly, peacefully, and pleasantly. I was interested in a talk with some Priestless Old Believers from Vyatsk Government: peasants and tradesmen; very simple, wise, decent, and serious folk. We had an excellent talk about Faith.

Further light is thrown on his transitional state of mind by an account given by V. I. Alexéyef to P. I. Birukóf of his first acquaintance with Tolstoy:

I was literally starving. Through some acquaintances, a place as tutor at Count Tolstoy's was offered me. I was so frightened by the Count's title, that at first I declined. But they persuaded me; and I set out for Yásnaya Polyána and settled in a peasant's hut in the village, and used to go to Leo Nikoláyevitch's<sup>1</sup> house to give lessons. Subsequently I moved into a wing close to his own house. From the very first his affability overcame all my fears, and very friendly relations were established between us. Leo Nikoláyevitch was then still sincerely Orthodox. I myself was at that time an atheist, and also frank and sincere about it. It seemed to me that one chief motive of his Orthodoxy was his fondness for the peasants, and his wish to share in the life of the people, to study it, to understand it, and to help it. Nevertheless, when talking to him, I frequently expressed surprise that with his culture, intellect and sincerity, he could go to church, pray, and observe the Church rites. I remember a conversation one clear and frosty day in the sitting-room of his house at Yásnaya. He was sitting opposite a window which through its frosty tracery admitted the slanting rays of the setting sun. After hearing me, he remarked: 'Look now at that tracery lit up by the sun. We only see the sun's reflection in it, but yet we know that beyond it, somewhere afar, is the real sun, the source of light that produces the picture we see. The people see that reflection in

<sup>1</sup> This use of Christian name and patronymic (instead of surname) is the usual and polite Russian fashion.

religion; but I look further, and see—or at least know—that there is the very source of light. That difference in our relation to the facts does not prevent our communion; we both look at this reflection of the sun; only our reason penetrates it to different depths.'

I noticed, however, that from time to time a dissatisfied feeling crept into his soul. Once on returning from church he said to me: 'No, I can't do it! It oppresses me. I stand among them, and hear their fingers tap against their sheep-skin coats as they make the sign of the cross; and at the very same time I hear them, both men and women, whispering about the most everyday affairs, that have no connection with the service. Their talk on village matters, and the women's gossip, whispered to one another at the most solemn moments of the service, show that their relation to it is one of complete unconsciousness.'

Of course I treated with all possible delicacy the process going on in him, and only expressed my opinions frankly when he questioned me.

Sometimes we started a conversation on economic and social themes. I had a copy of the Gospels, left from the days of my Socialist propaganda among the people. Passages relating to social questions were underlined in it, and I often pointed these out to Leo Nikoláyevitch. The work constantly going on within him gave him no peace, and at last brought on a crisis.

We have mention of the days when Tolstoy was approaching this crisis and writing his *Confession*, in a letter from his wife to her sister Tatiána Kouzmínsky:

8 November 1878.—Lyóvotchka has now quite settled down to his writing. His eyes are fixed and strange, he hardly talks at all, has quite ceased to belong to this world, and is positively incapable of thinking about everyday matters.

Many indications are given in other letters of the fact  
 1879 that the strain of mental and spiritual effort was  
 affecting his health. For instance, on 16th February he wrote to Fet:

I am still poorly, dear Afanásy Afanásyevitch, and so did not at once reply to your letter with the excellent poem. This one is quite beautiful. Should it ever be broken and fall to ruins, and only the fragment *Too many Tears* be found, people will place that in a museum and use it as a model.

I am neither ill nor well, but the mental and spiritual vigour I need are absent. Not as in your case! The tree is dry!

On 5th March the Countess wrote to her sister:

Lyóvotchka reads, reads, reads . . . writes very little, but sometimes says: 'Now it is clearing up,' or, 'Ah, God willing, what I am going to write will be very important!'

On 17th April he wrote again to Fet:

There is a prayer which says: 'Not according to our merits, but according to Thy mercy.' So, I to you. I have received your long and good letter. I will certainly, and soon, go to Kief and come to Vorobyévka [Fet's place] and will then tell you everything; for the present I will only reply to your fears.

Heaven knows where my *Decembrists* now are. I do not think about them, and were I to do so and to write, I flatter myself that my breath alone, of which they would smell, would be unendurable to those who shoot men for the good of humanity. . . . But I should mention that, even now [the war with Turkey was just over] I conscientiously abstain from reading the newspapers, and consider it a duty to wean every one from that pernicious practice. . . . An elderly and good man sits in Vorobyévka, and after melting two or three pages of Schopenhauer in his brain and pouring them out again in Russian, he plays a game of billiards, shoots some woodcock, admires the colts out of Zakrása [a mare], and sits with his wife drinking excellent tea, smoking a cigar, loving every one and loved by all; when suddenly a stinking, damp sheet of paper is brought, nasty to handle and harmful to the eyes, and it at once evokes in his heart angry condemnation and a feeling of estrangement: the feeling that 'I love nobody and nobody loves me,' and then he begins to talk and talk, and gets angry and suffers. One should chuck it! Then things would go much better.

On 25th May he wrote apologising for having postponed his promised visit to Fet. The delay he says was caused by the boys' examinations :

. . . Another cause has been the beautiful spring. It is long since I so enjoyed God's world as I have done this year. One stands open-mouthed, delighting in it and fearing to move lest one should miss anything. . . . My wife has gone to Toúla with the children, and I am reading good books, and shall presently go for a three- or four-hours' walk.

In June he at last set out for Kief, which with its great catacomb-Monastery is one of the chief places of pilgrimage in Russia. Thousands flock there every year seeking spiritual nourishment. Of Tolstoy's interest in such pilgrims we get a glimpse in a letter from Stráhof to Danílevsky, the writer, which also shows that Tolstoy had by that time shaken off his indisposition :

I found Tolstoy in excellent spirits this time. With what vivacity he is carried away by his ideas! Only young people seek truth as ardently as he; and I can say positively that he is now in the very bloom of his strength. He has abandoned all his plans and is writing nothing, but works tremendously. One day he took me with him and showed me one of the things that occupy him. He walks to the high-road (a quarter-of-a-mile from his house), and there at once finds men and women pilgrims. With them he starts conversation, and if he chances upon good specimens and is himself in good form, he hears wonderful tales. About a mile-and-a-half away, lies a small hamlet in which are two rest-houses for pilgrims (maintained not for profit, but for soul-saving) [that is, for the good of the soul of the endower]. We entered one of them. Some eight people were there—old men and women—doing whatever they liked; supping, praying, or resting. There is always some one talking, narrating, or explaining, and it is very interesting to listen. Besides the religious side, to which he is much devoted (he observes the fasts and goes to church on Sundays) Tolstoy is also concerned with the language. He

has come to appreciate the beauty of our folk-language wonderfully. Every day he discovers new words and expressions, and every day he denounces our literary language more and more, calling it not Russian but Spanish. All this, I am convinced, will yield rich fruit. . . .

The chief theme of Tolstoy's thoughts, if I am not mistaken, is the contrast between old Russia and new Europeanised Russia. He repeats as new, much that was said by the Slavophiles, but he will experience it and understand it all as no one else has done.

Some one will no doubt some day write an essay on the influence of the Slavophiles on Tolstoy's thought. They and he alike regard Russia as superior to, and more truly Christian than, the rest of the world, and conclude that she should therefore not follow in the footsteps of Western constitutionalism. Tolstoy's feeling, that to remedy life's ills men should forgive and endure, but should not rule, and that the more they can escape the responsibility and guilt of ruling, the better it will be, as also his ardent endeavour at this period to unite with the Orthodox Russian Church, were all in accord with Slavophil doctrines. It is true it was not long before Orthodoxy became intolerable to him, but no one who studies the matter can help seeing how deeply and permanently his trend of thought has been tinged by Slavophil ideas and feelings. His genius for attractive expression has made the Western world aware of these ideas; but even his genius has not enabled us to assimilate them. If they be really sound, it is the fate of the Western world still to sit in darkness.

His journey to Kief was not a success. In a letter to his wife from thence he writes, on 14th June:

All morning, till 3 o'clock, I went about among the churches catacombs and monks, and am very dissatisfied with my expedition. It was not worth coming. At 7 o'clock I went to the Monastery to see Anthony, the *Skimnik* [a monk of the strictest Order] and got little from him that was of any use.



Tolstoy was equally disappointed next day, and did not remain long in the holy city; which now bears the reputation of being one of the most dissolute in Europe.

On his road home he paid his promised visit to Fet, and after reaching Yásnaya, wrote him, on 13th July :

Do not be vexed with me, dear Afanásy Afanásyevitch, for not writing to thank you for the pleasant day I spent at your place, and for not answering your last letter. It is probably true that I was out of spirits while with you (forgive me for it) and I am still not in good spirits. I am ever capricious, tormenting myself, troubled, correcting myself, and learning; and I wonder whether, like V. P. Bótkin, I shall not 'fill up a gap' and then die [Bótkin, conscious of a gap in his erudition, read up the history of India just before his death]; but still I cannot refrain from turning myself inside out.

We still have measles in the house. It has picked out half the children already, and we are expecting the rest to take it.

On 28th July he wrote again :

Thank you for your last kind letter, dear Afanásy Afanásyevitch, and for the apologue about the hawk, which pleases me, but which I should like more fully explained. If I am that hawk, and if, as indicated by what follows, my too distant flights mean that I reject real life, then I must justify myself. I reject neither real life, nor the labour necessary for its maintenance; but it seems to me that the greater part of my life and yours is taken up with satisfying not our natural wants, but wants invented by us, or artificially inoculated by our education, and that have become habitual to us; and that nine-tenths of the work we devote to satisfying those demands, is idle work. I should very much like to be firmly convinced that I give people more than I take from them; but as I feel myself much disposed to value my own work high and other people's work low, I do not hope by simply intensifying my labour and choosing what is most difficult, to assure myself that their account with me does not land them in a loss (I am sure to tell myself that the work I like, is the most necessary and difficult). Therefore I wish to take as little from others as

possible, and to work as much as possible for the satisfaction of my own needs; and I think that is the easiest way to avoid making a mistake.

The next letter, of 31st August 1879, was less argumentative:

DEAR AFANÁSY AFANÁSYEVITCH,—Of course I am again to blame towards you, but of course, not from lack of love for you or remembrance of you. Stráhof and I had, in fact, been talking about you, and judging and disposing of you as we all judge of one another, and as God grant others may judge of me. Stráhof was highly pleased with his visit to you, and yet more so with your translation [of Schopenhauer].

I have successfully recommended to you *The Arabian Nights* and Pascal; the one and the other, I will not say pleased, but suited you. I now have a book to offer you which no one has yet read, and which I read the other day for the first time; and continue to read with exclamations of delight. I hope it will be to your taste, especially as it has much in common with Schopenhauer: it is the *Proverbs* of Solomon, *Ecclesiastes*, and the *Book of Wisdom*. It would be difficult to find anything more modern; but if you read it, read it in Slavonic. I have a new Russian translation which is very bad. The English version is also bad. If you had the Greek, you would see what it is like. . . .

Since Stráhof's visit, we have had guests one after the other: private theatricals, and all the devils let loose. Thirty-four sheets in use for the guests, and thirty people at dinner, and all went off well, and all—including myself—were gay.

The following brief notes occur in his Diary, dated 28th October:

There are worldly people, heavy and wingless. Their sphere is down below. There are among them strong ones: Napoleon. They leave terrible traces among men, and cause an uproar, but it is all on the earth. There are those whose wings grow equably, and who slowly rise and fly: monks. There are light people, winged, who rise easily from among the crowd and again descend: good idealists. There are strong-winged ones,

who, drawn by carnal desires, descend among the crowd and break their wings. Such am I. Then they struggle with broken wings, flutter strongly, and fall. If my wings heal, I will fly high. God grant it. . . .

There are those who have heavenly wings, and purposely—from love to men—descend to earth (folding their wings) and teach men to fly. When they are no more needed, they fly away : Christ.

During this period of storm and stress in Tolstoy's soul, one comes again and again on signs of change and growth and altered habits. Up to this time he had submitted to the Church; and even when his doctor advised him, on grounds of health, not to observe the Fasts, instead of deciding the matter for himself, he went to the Troítsa Monastery of St. Sergius (forty-four miles north of Moscow) to consult, and obtain the consent of, the famous monk, Leoníd. A little later, the Church's hold on him had so weakened that he entirely abandoned fasting. V. I. Alexéyef tells the story as follows :

The Countess, like her husband, observed the Fasts, and made the children do so. When she noticed that her husband was wavering, she increased the strictness of the Fast so that every one in the house fasted except the French tutor, M. Nief, and myself. I told the Countess that though I did not fast, I could eat anything that was served up; but she always ordered meat to be cooked for us two tutors. And so, one day, fast-food was handed to every one else, and some nice cutlets were served for us. We helped ourselves, and the footman left the dish on the window-sill. Then Leo Nikoláyevitch, turning to his son, said: 'Ilúsha [Ilyá, the second son], give me a cutlet.' The lad brought it, and Leo Nikoláyevitch ate the meat with a good appetite, and gave up fasting from that day forth.

Before the end of the year, Tolstoy had definitely concluded that it was impossible to reconcile the demands of the Church with the demands of his own reason and conscience.

In November the Countess wrote to her sister :

Lyóvotchka is always at work, as he expresses it; but alas! he is writing some sort of religious discussion. He reads and thinks till his head aches, and all to show how incompatible the Church is with the teaching of the Gospel. Hardly ten people in Russia will be interested in it; but there is nothing to be done. I only wish he would get it done quicker, and that it would pass like an illness! No one on earth can control him or impose this or that mental work upon him: it is not even in his own power to do so.

His wife's letters give us a glimpse of the trouble sure to occur from the close union of two people of strong individuality, one of whom changed his outlook on life, and wished to change his way of life accordingly. I once knew a lady who said that no man should change his opinions after he was married! The Countess Tolstoy must often have felt inclined to say something like that, when she saw her husband consumed by a fervent devotion to conclusions not her own, and to which, since they went on continually evolving and developing, it was all the more impossible for her to adjust herself.

She gave birth to a tenth child on 20th December 1879: a boy who was christened Michael. As three had died in infancy, there were now seven children in the family.

It has been mentioned that after their marriage the Tolstoys had not many visitors, except relations; but with the growth of the younger generation this altered, and Yásnaya Polyána began to swarm with young people. Tolstoy's change of outlook on life also made him more accessible to all sorts and conditions of men, though it caused him to reject some acquaintances whom almost any one else would have been glad to know.

Prince D. Obolénsky has recounted that Tolstoy allowed him to introduce friends without obtaining special permission to do so each time. On one occasion, however,

to Obolénsky's dismay, Tolstoy definitely avoided an introduction he was anxious to give, and this in reference to General Skóbelef—then at the very height of his fame after the Turkish War and the capture of Plevna. A similar case occurred somewhat later, when Tolstoy refused the acquaintance of the painter, V. V. Verestchágin. Light is thrown on his feelings towards these men by his references to them in the Preface to *Sevastopol*.<sup>1</sup> The passage in Verestchágin's *Memoirs* where that artist mentions persuading General Stroúkof to hasten the hanging of two Turks, that he might sketch the execution, aroused Tolstoy's profoundest indignation, criminals though the victims doubtless were.

In December, Tolstoy received a letter from Tourgénéf, who wrote from Paris:

The Princess Paskévitch, who has translated your *War and Peace*, has at last sent 500 copies here, of which I have received ten. I have given them to the most influential critics (Taine and About, among others). . . . The translation is somewhat feeble, but has been done with zeal and love. A couple of days ago I read, for the fifth or sixth time, with real pleasure, that truly great production of yours.

Tolstoy was by this time so absorbed in other concerns that the fate of the French translation of his great novel seems to have interested him less than it did Tourgénéf; indeed it never was Tolstoy's way to trouble himself much about the fate of his books after they had once left his hands.

Tourgénéf, an ardent admirer of Poushkin, returned to Russia in 1880, to take part in the celebration of the eightieth anniversary of that poet's birth. Aware of Tolstoy's dislike of jubilees and public celebrations, the

<sup>1</sup> Strictly speaking, it is a Preface to Ershóf's *Recollections of Sevastopol*, but it has been used in English as a Preface to the edition of Tolstoy's *Sevastopol*, issued by Constable in London, and Funk and Wagnall in New York.

committee requested Tourgénéf to use his personal influence to persuade Tolstoy to be present at the unveiling of the Poushkin Monument in Moscow; and with this purpose Tourgénéf visited Yásnaya the week after Easter. 1880

He was very cordially received. A woodcock-shooting expedition was arranged in his honour in the woods near by. In the dusk of the spring evening the Countess stood beside him awaiting the flight of the birds. While he was getting his gun ready, she asked him: 'Why have you not written anything for so long?' Tourgénéf glanced round, and in his touchingly frank way, with a guilty smile, said: 'Are we out of hearing? Well, I will tell you. . . . Every time I planned anything, I was shaken by the fever of love! Now that is all over: I am old, and can no longer either love or write.'

To Tolstoy, also, Tourgénéf spoke of the change that had come over him—him to whom love-affairs had formed so large a part of the joy of life. 'I had an affair the other day,' said he, 'and, will you believe it? I found it dull!' 'Ah,' exclaimed Tolstoy, 'if only I were like that!' It was, indeed, a matter on which their views differed radically, and on which the younger man's struggle for self-mastery was still far from fully achieved.

On returning to the house they found awaiting them Prince L. D. Ouroúsof, Vice-Governor of Toúla, a cousin of Prince S. S. Ouroúsof previously mentioned. He was one of Tolstoy's most intimate friends and shared his outlook on life. Tourgénéf, too, was glad to see Ouroúsof, though the two seldom met without a strenuous dispute.

Tolstoy's profoundly artistic nature has again and again caused him to long to turn, and sometimes actually to turn, from didactic or philosophic work to the creation of works of art; and a little before this, he had hit on the idea of writing short prose-poems. Having composed one, he sent it, signed in the name of an old servant, to

Aksákof's paper, *Rous*. The MS. came back declined with thanks, on the ground that its author was 'not yet sufficiently expert in expression!' Resigning himself to his failure, Tolstoy passed on the idea to Tourgénéf, and to it we owe the latter's *Poems in Prose*.

One of these, *The Dog*, he had brought with him, and after the shooting-party had returned to the house, he read it aloud. Its attitude towards death, and to man and dog, were not in tune with Tolstoy's or Ouroúsof's feelings; and, the reading ended, an awkward pause ensued. Soon, however, Ouroúsof and Tourgénéf were warmly discussing the need of a religious outlook on life. Tourgénéf sat at the head of the table, Tolstoy at his right hand, and Ouroúsof at his left. The latter kept emphasising his remarks by vigorously pointing a forefinger at Tourgénéf; and gradually becoming increasingly animated, he balanced his chair more and more on its front legs till it suddenly slipped from under him and he sprawled on his back on the floor, continuing in that position to argue, until a general roar of laughter compelled him to pause. Hastily resuming his seat, he then continued his contention as though nothing had occurred.

Next day Tourgénéf and Tolstoy went for a walk together, and apparently Tourgénéf took this opportunity to broach his mission. Tolstoy's admiration for Póúshkin, whom he regards as the foremost of Russian writers, and the fact that this was the first time it had been permitted to pay public honour to the memory of a Russian man of letters, led Tourgénéf to assume that his host would surely agree to take part in the Jubilee. But to Tolstoy, the feasting, the expense, the artificiality, and the fictitious enthusiasm accompanying such affairs, were profoundly repugnant, and he met the request with a definite refusal. The following passage from *What is Art?* written seventeen years later, explains his motives:

When fifty years had elapsed after Poúshkin's death, and simultaneously the cheap edition of his works began to circulate among the people and a monument was erected to him in Moscow, I received more than a dozen letters from different peasants asking why Poúshkin was raised to such dignity? And only the other day a man from Sarátov called on me who had evidently gone out of his mind on this very question. He was on his way to Moscow to expose the clergy for having taken part in raising a 'monament' to Mr. Poúshkin.

Indeed one need only imagine to oneself what the state of mind of such a man must be when he learns from such rumours and newspapers as reach him, that the clergy, the Government officials, and all the best people in Russia, are triumphantly unveiling a statue to a great man, the benefactor, the pride of Russia—Poúshkin, of whom till then he had never heard. From all sides he reads or hears about this, and he naturally supposes that if such honours are rendered to any one, it must undoubtedly be to a man who has done something extraordinary—either some feat of strength or of goodness. He tries to learn who Poúshkin was, and having discovered that Poúshkin was neither a hero nor a general, but a private person and a writer, he comes to the conclusion that he must have been a saint and a teacher of goodness, and he hastens to read or hear his life and works. But what must be his perplexity when he learns that Poúshkin was a man of more than easy morals, who was killed in a duel—that is, when attempting to murder another man—and that all his services consisted in writing verses about love, which were often very indecent.

That a hero, or Alexander the Great, or Genghis Khan, or Napoleon was great, he understands, for any one of them could have crushed him and a thousand like him; that Buddha, Socrates, and Christ were great he also understands, for he knows and feels that he and all men should be like them; but why a man should be great because he wrote verses about the love of women, he cannot make out. . . .

And it is the same with children. I remember how I passed through this stage of amazement and stupefaction, and only reconciled myself to this exaltation of artists to the level of heroes and saints by lowering in my own estimation the



importance of moral excellence; and by attributing a false, unnatural meaning to works of art. And a similar confusion must occur in the soul of each child and each man of the people, when he hears of the strange honours and rewards that are lavished on artists. . . .

We have no account of what passed between the two men that day, but the Countess has recorded that :

The dinner-bell had sounded. All had assembled, but neither Tourgénéf nor Leo Nikoláyevitch appeared. At last, after long waiting, I guessed where to look for them. Not far from the house, in the wood among the old oaks, stood a small hut Leo Nikoláyevitch had built for himself in order, in summer, to have solitude for his work and to escape from flies, children, and visitors. I ran to that hut, which was built on four pillars, and ascended the steps, and through the open door saw the two writers hotly disputing.

No rupture of friendly relations occurred, but so great was Tourgénéf's dismay at Tolstoy's uncompromising refusal, that when, shortly afterwards, Dostoyévsky—the third of the trio of great Russian novelists then living—wished to visit Yásnaya, and consulted Tourgénéf on the matter, the latter spoke of Tolstoy's mood in such a way that Dostoyévsky abandoned his intention, and died a year later without having ever met Tolstoy, whose writings he had, from the first, so much admired, and to whose *Anna Karénina* he had publicly referred as the most palpable proof Russia could offer to the Western world of her capacity to contribute something great to the solution of the problems that oppress humanity.

From this time onward Tourgénéf, without ceasing to be interested in Tolstoy personally, and while continuing to praise him enthusiastically as a novelist, never missed an opportunity to express his distrust of, and regret concerning, those new interests which were so profoundly stirring the depths of Tolstoy's nature, and were destined to move the minds of men in many lands far more pro-

foundly than his novels had ever done, but the power and importance of which the elder writer realised as little as a man suffering from colour-blindness realises the values in a picture. The same clash of feeling between those to whom Tolstoy's later work is important, and those to whom it is not, shows itself continually. Generally those who condemn it have shown, as Tourgénéf did, a touch of contemptuous irritability, which suggests that at the back of their minds there lurks a suspicion that to consider the purpose of man's life is, after all, more important than to enjoy art's anæsthetics.

To Polónsky, Tourgénéf wrote in December 1880 : 'I am very sorry for Tolstoy. . . . However, as the French say, *Chacun a sa manière de tuer ses puces*' (Every one kills his fleas his own way). A few months later he wrote :

It is an unpardonable sin that Leo Tolstoy has stopped writing—he is a man who could be extraordinarily useful, but what can one do with him? He does not utter a word, and worse than that, he has plunged into mysticism. Such an artist, such first-class talent, we have never had, nor now have, among us. I, for instance, am considered an artist, but what am I worth compared to him! In contemporary European literature he has no equal. Whatever he takes up, it all becomes alive under his pen. And how wide the sphere of his creative power—it is simply amazing! Whether he describes a whole historic epoch, as in *War and Peace*, or a man of our day with high spiritual interests and aspirations, or simply a peasant with a purely Russian soul, he always remains a master. He depicts a lady of the higher circles, and she is lifelike; and so is a semi-savage Circassian. Just see how he describes even an animal! . . . how, for instance, he depicts the mental condition of a horse! But what is one to do with him? He has plunged headlong into another sphere: has surrounded himself with Bibles and Gospels in nearly all languages, and has written a whole heap of papers. He has a trunk full of these mystical ethics and of various pseudo-interpretations. He read me some of it, which I simply do

not understand. . . . I told him, 'That was not the real thing'; but he replied: 'It is just the real thing.' . . . Very probably he will give nothing more to literature, or if he reappears, it will be with that trunk. . . . And he has followers: Gárrshin, for instance, is undoubtedly his follower.

The mention in the above letter of Tolstoy's capacity to enter into the mind of a horse, recalls an event that occurred during one of Tourgénéf's visits to Yásnaya. Coming on an old worn-out horse grazing in a field, Tolstoy went up to it and stroked it, and began to voice its thoughts and sad feelings so vividly and convincingly, that Tourgénéf at last exclaimed: 'I am sure, Leo Nikoláyevitch, you must once have been a horse yourself!'

The remark at the end of Tolstoy's *Confession*, to the effect that he was setting to work to disentangle the truth from the falsehood he found in the Church teaching, and that this would form the next part of his work, 'which if it be worth it, and if any one wants it, will probably some day be printed somewhere,' indicates the difficulty in which he now found himself with reference to the publication of his works. Books calling in question the bases of the Church faith had hardly a chance of getting published in Russia. A capricious Censor might now and then happen to pass one such work or some part of it; but the whole business was dangerous and uncertain, and might easily involve all concerned not merely in material loss, but also in serious danger. Tolstoy was working primarily to clear matters up for himself. He never had been accustomed to trouble himself much about the fate of his writings, and in later life he has felt that that is not his business, and that his books will, one day or other, be sure to circulate. This faith has saved him much worry, and has enabled him to go on working under conditions in which another's hands would have dropped.

For the present he put aside his practically completed

*Confession*, and proceeded to write *A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology*, which was followed in turn by a voluminous *Union and Translation of the Four Gospels*, and a fourth book, *What do I Believe?* (sometimes called *My Religion*)—the whole series occupying him for several years, almost to the exclusion of other work. All this involved a tremendous concentration of effort, and was done with no possibility of pecuniary profit, no apparent chance of being allowed to publish in Russia, and without any definite plan for publication abroad. Were all other evidence lacking, this alone would suffice to prove both Tolstoy's sincerity and his sense of the overwhelming importance of the matters with which he was dealing.

On 31st May 1880, we find him again apologising to Fet.

Before telling you how ashamed I am, and how I feel myself to blame towards you, let me first of all say that I am tremendously grateful to you, dear Afanásy Afanásyevitch, for your kind, excellent and, above all, wise letter. You had cause to be displeased with me, and instead of expressing the displeasure which might well exist, you have told me its cause good-naturedly, and above all, in such a way that I feel you still care for me.

Your letter produced in me a feeling of softened emotion, and of shame at my slovenliness—nothing more. This is what happened, and these are my final impressions about our relation: You wrote to me, as usual. I, as usual, received your letter gladly, and—not as usual, but with even greater inaccuracy than before (in consequence of my specially intense pre-occupation this year)—replied to your letter; but towards spring I received from you another, which showed that you considered me to blame for something. My only—and not real—fault towards you, was that on reading that letter I did not at once, as I wished to, write asking you to explain why you were dissatisfied with me. Again my occupations are some small excuse, and I beg you to forgive me. . . . In any case forgive me, and do not change towards me, as I shall not change towards you while we remain alive. I am very, very much

obliged to you for your letter. I now feel so comfortable, for I firmly hope to receive from you a nice note, and perhaps you will show that you have quite forgiven me, by coming to see us. My wife greets you; she felt as I did about you, only more strongly.

On 8th July he writes again to the same correspondent.

It is now summer and a charming summer, and as usual I go crazy with life and forget my work. This year I struggled long, but the beauty of the world conquered me. I enjoy life and do hardly anything else. Our house is full of visitors. The children have got up theatricals, and it is noisy and merry. I have with difficulty found a corner, and snatched a moment, to write you a word. . . .

In August, Stráhof, again visiting Yásnaya, wrote to Danílevsky:

At Yásnaya Polyána, as always, most strenuous mental work is going on. . . . I am carried away and subdued by it, so that it even oppresses me. Tolstoy, following his unalterable path, has reached a religious frame of mind, which partly found expression in the latter part of *Anna Karénina*. He has understood the Christian ideal wonderfully. It is strange how we pass by the Gospels without seeing their simplest meaning. He is now engrossed in studying their text, and he has explained much in it with striking simplicity and acuteness. I greatly fear that from lack of practice in the exposition of abstract thought, and in writing prose generally [to Stráhof, poetry includes fiction—the word being frequently so used in Russian], he will not succeed in expressing his arguments briefly and clearly, but the contents of the book he is composing are truly magnificent.

While working so hard at his books, Tolstoy did not abstain from rendering practical help to the peasantry around him. Arboúzof, in his *Recollections* of his master, tells of an event that occurred in this year, 1880:

The peasants who had been serfs of a neighbouring landlord, Homyakóf, happened to discover that their former owner had appropriated 175 acres of land that properly belonged to the

village Commune. They applied to Tolstoy for assistance, and he took much trouble on their behalf, and eventually enabled them to recover the land. Wishing to show their gratitude, they reaped his hay and grain crops for him, intending not to charge anything for this service; but seeing that they had worked well, he paid them at more than the usual rate for the time they had given, and also treated them to a good dinner with plenty of vodka.

In another place Arboúzof recounts that Prince Ouroúsof used to come over to Yásnaya on Saturdays from Toúla. Once in midwinter the two friends went out for a walk with Tolstoy's three eldest sons. Before they had gone far, Tolstoy observed something black lying in the snow. On examination, it turned out to be a frozen man. The boys were sent home quickly to bid the coachman bring a carrier's sledge and a fur coat. Tolstoy and Ouroúsof wrapped the man in the fur coat, lifted him on to the sledge, and took him to the steward's house in the village. There they employed all possible means to restore him to life. They rubbed him, gave him spirits, and continued their exertions for hours, but without result. The Count had a coffin made, and a grave dug in the frozen ground, and hired a priest to read the burial service, and he and the Prince paid all the expenses.

It was an immense advantage to the peasants of the district to have a man of education and influence to whom they could turn in time of trouble. Much of the help Tolstoy gave was of such an everyday nature that though it left its trace on the hearts and lives of those who received it, it is nowhere recorded, and now escapes our observation.

It has always been his practice to listen to, and advise, those who come to consult him; and some come every day. He has written for them innumerable petitions, statements, and letters of introduction; and no doubt his inveterate dislike of law and jurisprudence has largely grown from his experience of the extreme difficulty of obtaining

elementary justice for poor ignorant and oppressed peasants.

There is much in Tolstoy's life at this period on which one would be glad to have more exact information: for instance, the non-publication of the books he wrote makes it uncertain just when some of them were completed.

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## CHAPTER II

### THEOLOGY AND THE GOSPELS

The Church and Religion. *A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology.* How to Read the Gospels. A Summary of Tolstoy's view of religion. Christ's Five Commandments. Tolstoy's interpretation. Darwinism prevalent. Tolstoy and the Ethical Movement. Old Testament Scriptures. Paul's Epistles. The Gospels. Future life. Spiritualism. Miracles. Feeding the Five Thousand. Faith-cures. Oaths. Individualist *versus* Nationalist perception. Objection to Tolstoy's view. The value of definiteness. The ethical basis of the existing order. The value of Tolstoy's protest. *The Four Gospels.* Jesus and his teaching. Method of interpretation. Demagnetising the Gospels. Changing view of Christ. Manual labour and the Sermon on the Mount. *Church and State. The Gospel in Brief. What do I Believe?* Sexual fidelity. Patriotism. Tolstoy's superstitions. His moral indictment. Walter Bagehot. Prayer.

THE problem before Tolstoy was that of separating what is true from what is false in the teachings of the Church and in the Bible.

He had learnt by experience that man needs guidance, and requires a chart of life to enable him to steer his course; but he was too sincere to adopt a creed merely because he needed one, or to accept anything he saw no sufficient reason to believe. Other men have felt the need for religion as keenly as he, and not a few have shared his courage and truthfulness; but he alone, in our time, combined this profoundly religious spirit and fearless truthfulness, with a genius for literary expression which secured for what he had to say the attention of the world.



Owing moreover to the personal risk he (in Russia) ran, his words became heroic deeds, causing the blood of those who heard them to flow faster in their veins.

He first carefully examined the dogmas of the Orthodox Russian Church as stated in the Creeds, and in the Dogmatic Theology of Makarius, Metropolitan of Moscow. These, including as they do the doctrine of the Trinity, the miraculous birth of Christ, and the scheme of Redemption and Atonement, do not differ essentially from the dogmas of the Catholic or Protestant Churches.

The conclusion Tolstoy slowly and reluctantly reached, was that they, and the whole theology in which they are embedded, are utterly false. The more he looked into the matter, the more shocked was he at the levity with which the Churches have accepted conclusions based on evidence which, he says, will not stand the simplest tests of logic. He found it difficult to understand why the theologians say such strange things, and why they support their assertions by arguments that insult human intelligence. But he tells us that he gradually traced out the shallow verbal tricks by which their tenets are pieced together, and found himself driven to the conclusion that dogmatic theology is a fraud which endures only because it is screened from exposure by the authority of the Church; and examining further what the Church itself is, he came to the conclusion that it is, 'Power in the hands of certain men.'

Tolstoy charges the Church with lack of intellectual integrity; and since the end of the 'seventies, when he finally discriminated between the Church dogmas and Christ's teaching, he has never ceased to regard the influence of the former as a terrible obstacle to man's moral progress, and to the spread of any right understanding of religion.

He maintains that though many people credulously accept and repeat the Church dogmas, nobody really

believes them, for they mean nothing at all, and a statement must have a meaning before it can be believed. For instance, the statement that some one went up a hill and then rose up into heaven and sat down there, may have had a meaning when people lived on a flat earth with a burning hell down below, and a solid firmament up above; but with our conception of astronomy, if a man began to rise from the top of a hill, there is nowhere for him to stop! And if he tried to sit down, he would have nothing to sit on and would tumble back again. For people who believe in the solar system to say they believe in the Ascension, is merely to talk nonsense.

Faith is a great virtue; but to be faithful to a belief, you must have a belief; and a real belief is not attainable by credulity (which is a vice) but by vigorous mental effort.

Tolstoy's denunciations of the Church are, at times, as unstinted as those of the late Mr. Bradlaugh. In his *Appeal to the Clergy*, written in 1902 (*Essays and Letters*, p. 347) for instance, he says:

Drive a wedge between the floor-boards of a granary, and no matter how much grain you pour in, it will not stay there. Just so a head into which the wedge has been driven of a Trinity, or of a God who became man and redeemed the human race by his sufferings and then flew up into the sky, can no longer grasp any reasonable or firm understanding of life.

However much you may put into that granary, all will run out, and whatever you may put into a mind which has accepted nonsense as a matter of faith, nothing will remain in it. . . .

It may be true, and I think it is true, that Tolstoy goes to an extreme in his denunciations of the Churches; for if one hunts back carefully and sympathetically enough, one may discover that doctrines which will not *now* stand the simplest tests of common-sense, meant *something* genuine to those who first formulated them; and Churches have done good as well as evil. Had there been no

Churches or Monastic Orders, or Priests or Popes, it is doubtful whether the world would have been any better than it is. On the whole, the tendency of religious communities, Church or Chapel, as long as they retain any vitality, is to keep people in moral touch with one another, and to make it easier for them to abstain from flagrant wrong-doing.

Tolstoy, however, in his direct way, took theology at its own valuation, and asked whether in its plain, literal sense, as it is given to and accepted by children and ignorant people, it is really true. And having come to the conclusion that it is not, he denounced it as a fraud which it is the duty of every honest man to expose, and a disgrace for any decent man to trade in.

Had his nature not been profoundly religious he might have stopped there, and contented himself, as Voltaire and Bradlaugh did, with ridiculing and denouncing the superstitions by which mankind are hoodwinked; but being differently made, he hastened on to constructive work, and proclaimed the power and worth of the teaching of Jesus more ardently than he condemned the Church's teaching.

His book, *A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology*, was completed about the year 1880, but was only printed in 1891, when a Russian edition was issued at Geneva. It was carelessly edited and produced, and ultimately superseded by a better edition published by A. Tchertkóf at Christchurch, in 1903.

This book is, probably, the least read of all Tolstoy's works. The only English translation is in Professor Wiener's edition, which I cannot commend. Those who are at the pains to read the original Russian, will, however, find that the attack on a Church directed by a Holy Synod controlled by Pobedonóstsef and guarded by gendarmes, is a very remarkable and fervent piece of work, and deserves a larger circle of readers than it has had.

In it, Tolstoy tells us that he came to see that, far

from coinciding with Christ's teaching, the dogmas the Churches are concerned to enforce are expressly designed to divert men's minds from the things Jesus cared for and spoke most about. It is abundantly plain from the Gospels that he constantly spoke of love and pity, and of man's duty to man, and to that Father in heaven who sends the Spirit of Truth to be our Comforter; but he never talked about the Fall of Adam, or the scheme of Redemption, or said that God was a Trinity, or asserted that God was his Father in any sense in which he may not be our Father too; nor did he explain to any one that the Holy Spirit was the third person of a Trinity. It is true he often identified himself with his heavenly Father, as when, in John's Gospel, he said, 'I and the Father are one,' and 'Before Abraham was, I am'; but he also wished us to be identified with him in the same way: 'I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you'; and again, 'That they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and they in me.' He also taught his disciples to pray to 'Our Father'; and in the Synoptic Gospels, making a very clear distinction between himself and God, he said: 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' and in another passage he said, 'Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God.'

The Gospels often attribute to Jesus language evidently not used literally, as when he says he is 'the door,' or 'the vine'; and it lies with the reader to take his words reasonably or unreasonably. This applies equally to the statement that he was the 'Son of God.' To make this mean that God was his father in the same way that Mary was his mother, would be absurd; whereas to admit that God was his Father in a mystic sense, makes it extremely difficult to differentiate between God's Fatherhood of Jesus and his Fatherhood of the rest of humanity; and as soon as that is admitted, a door is opened enabling Christians to unite with the rest of humanity.

In the short article entitled, *How to Read the Gospels*<sup>1</sup> (1896), Tolstoy remarks that :

A great teacher is great just because he is able to express the truth so that it can neither be hidden nor obscured, but is as plain as daylight. . . . The truth is there, for all who will read the Gospels with a sincere wish to know the truth, without prejudice and, above all without supposing that they contain some special sort of wisdom beyond human reason.

That is how I read the Gospels, and I found in them truth plain enough for little children to understand, as indeed is there said. . . . And therefore, to the question how Christ's teaching should be understood, I reply: 'If you wish to understand it, read the Gospels. Read them, putting aside all foregone conclusions; read them with the sole desire to understand what is there said. But just because the Gospels are holy books, read them considerately, reasonably, and with discernment, and not haphazard or mechanically, as though all the words were of equal weight.'

To understand any book one must choose out the parts that are quite clear, dividing them from what is obscure or confused. And from what is clear we must form our idea of the drift and spirit of the whole work. Then, on the basis of what we have understood, we may proceed to make out what is confused or not quite intelligible. That is how we read all kinds of books. And it is particularly necessary thus to read the Gospels, which have passed through a multiplicity of compilations, translations, and transcriptions, and were composed eighteen centuries ago, by men who were not highly educated, and were superstitious.

Therefore, in order to understand the Gospels, we must first of all separate what is quite simple and intelligible from what is confused and unintelligible, and must afterwards read this clear and intelligible part several times over, trying fully to assimilate it. Then, helped by our comprehension of the general meaning, we can try to explain to ourselves the drift of the parts which seemed involved and obscure. That was how I read the Gospels, and the meaning of Christ's

<sup>1</sup> Published in *Essays and Letters*.

teaching became so clear to me that it was impossible to have any doubts about it. And I advise every one who wishes to understand the true meaning of Christ's teaching to follow the same plan.

Let each man, in reading the Gospels, select all that seems to him quite plain, clear, and comprehensible, and let him score it down the margin—say with a blue pencil—and then, taking the marked passages first, let him separate Christ's words from those of the Evangelists by marking Christ's words a second time with, say, a red pencil. Then let him read over these doubly-scored passages several times. Only after he has thoroughly assimilated these, let him again read the words attributed to Christ which he did not understand when he first read them, and let him score, in red, those which have become plain to him. Let him leave unscored the words of Christ which remain quite unintelligible, and also unintelligible words by the writers of the Gospels. The passages marked in red will supply the reader with the essence of Christ's teaching. They will give what all men need, and what Christ therefore said in a way that all can understand. The places marked only in blue will give what the authors of the Gospels said that is intelligible.

Very likely in selecting what is, from what is not, fully comprehensible, people will not all choose the same passages. What is comprehensible to one may seem obscure to another. But all will certainly agree in what is most important, and these are things which will be found quite intelligible to every one. It is just this—just what is fully comprehensible to all men—that constitutes the essence of Christ's teaching.

It must strike any one who reads the Gospels with an open mind and compares them with the Church Creeds, that if Jesus knew that God would go on punishing mankind for Adam's sin until atonement was made, and if Jesus approved of this, and made it the chief aim of his life and death to appease such a God; and if, moreover, he knew that men's eternal salvation depends on these things and on their believing rightly about them, it is

singularly unfortunate that he forgot to mention the matter, and left us to pick it up from obscure remarks made, years later, by St. Paul—whom he never met, and whose mind, character, and work differed considerably from his own.

To those who have read *Tolstoy and his Problems*, I must apologise for repeating, with but little alteration, what I there said of his understanding of Christ's teaching. It was approved of by Tolstoy himself, so that one is sure it represents his meaning correctly.

Each one of us has a reason and a conscience that come to us from somewhere: we did not make them ourselves. They oblige us to differentiate between good and evil; we *must* approve of some things and disapprove of others. In this respect we are all alike, all members of one family, and sons of one Father. Dormant or active, in each of us there is a higher and better nature: a spiritual, divine nature. If we open our hearts and minds we can, to some extent, discern good from evil in relation to our own conduct: the law is 'very nigh unto you, in your mouth and in your heart.' The purpose of our life on earth should be to serve—not our lower, animal nature, but that Power to which our higher nature recognises its kinship. Jesus boldly identifies himself with his higher nature, speaks of himself and of us as Sons of the Father, and bids us be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.

This then is the answer to the question: What is the meaning and purpose of my life? There is a Power enabling me to discern what is good; I am in touch with it, my reason and conscience flow from it, and the purpose of my conscious life is to do its will: that is, to do good.

Nor do the Gospels leave us without an application of this teaching to practical life. The Sermon on the Mount had always attracted Tolstoy, but much of it had also

perplexed him, especially the text; 'Resist not him that is evil, but whosoever smiteth thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.' This seemed to him unreasonable, and shocked all the prejudices of aristocratic family and personal 'honour' in which he had been brought up. But he tells us that so long as he rejected and tried to explain away that saying, he could get no coherent sense out of the teaching of Jesus, or out of the story of his life.

As soon as he admitted to himself that perhaps Jesus meant that saying seriously, it was as though he had found the key to a puzzle; the teaching and the example fitted together and formed one complete and admirable whole. He saw that in these chapters Jesus is very definitely summing up his practical advice: pointing out, five times over, what had been taught by 'them of old times,' and following it each time by the words, 'but I say unto you,' and giving an extension, or even a flat contradiction, to the old precept.

Here are the Five Commandments of Christ, an acceptance of which, or even a *comprehension of, and an attempt to follow* which, would alter the whole course of men's lives in our society.

1. 'Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment.'

Let me mention in passing, and as it were in parenthesis, that in the Russian version, as in our Authorised Version, the words, '*without a cause*,' occur after the word 'angry.' This makes nonsense of the whole passage, for no one ever is angry without supposing that he has some cause! Comparing different Greek texts, Tolstoy found that those words are an interpolation (the correction has been made in our English Revised Version), and he found other passages in



which the current translations obscure Christ's teaching: as for instance the popular libel which represents him as having flogged people in the Temple with a scourge; a matter again corrected in our Revised Version. Three of the Gospels do not mention that Jesus had a scourge at all, and the one that mentions it, only says, 'He made a scourge of cords, and cast all out of the temple, *both the sheep and the oxen*, and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew their tables; and to them that sold doves he said, Take these things hence. . . .' Not a single Gospel, in the Revised Version, says that he struck any one!

Returning to the first great guiding rule for a Christian, we find then that it is: *Do not be angry*.

Some people will say, 'We do not accept Christ's authority, so why should we not be angry?'

But test it any way you like: by experience, by the advice of other great teachers, or by the example of the best men and women in their best moods, and you will find that the advice is good.

But, finally, one may say, 'I cannot help being angry, it is my nature: I am made so.' Very well; there is no danger of your not doing what you must do; but religion and philosophy exist to help us to think and feel rightly, and to guide us, in so far as our animal nature allows us to be guided. If you can't abstain from anger altogether, *abstain from it as much as you can*.

2. 'Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.'

This second great rule of conduct is: *Do not lust*.

It is not generally accepted as good advice. In all our towns things exist—certain ways of dressing, ways of dancing, some entertainments, pictures, and theatrical posters—

which would not be there if every one agreed that lust is a bad thing, spoiling our lives.

Being animals we probably cannot help lusting, but the fact that *we* are imperfect does not prevent the advice from being good; so lust as little as you can, if you cannot be perfectly pure.

3. 'Again, ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: but I say unto you, Swear not at all. . . . But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay.'

How absurd! says some one. Here are five great commandments to guide us in life: the first is, 'Don't be angry,' the second is, 'Don't lust.' These are really broad, sweeping rules of conduct; but the third is, 'Don't say damn!' What is the particular harm, or importance, of using a few swear-words?

But that is not at all the meaning of the commandment. It, too, is a broad, sweeping rule, and means: *Do not give away the control of your future actions.* You have a reason and a conscience to guide you, but if you set them aside and swear allegiance elsewhere—to Tsar, Emperor, Kaiser, King, Queen, President or General—they may some day tell you to commit the most awful crimes; perhaps even to kill your fellow-men. What are you going to do then? Break your oath? or commit a crime you never would have dreamt of committing had you not first sworn an oath?

The present Emperor of Germany, Wilhelm II, once addressed some naval recruits just after they had taken the oath of allegiance to him. (It had been administered by a salaried servant of the Prince of Peace, on the book which says, 'Swear not at all.') Wilhelm II reminded them that they had taken the oath, and that if he called them out to shoot their own fathers they must now obey!

The whole organised and premeditated system of wholesale murder called war, is, Tolstoy says, based and built up in all lands on this practice of inducing people to entrust their consciences to the keeping of others.

4. 'Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, *Resist not him that is evil*; but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.'

That means, says Tolstoy, do not use physical violence against men who act in a way you disapprove of. Ultimately, taken in conjunction with other Commandments, it means much more than that.

There are two opposite ways of trying to promote the triumph of good over evil. One way is that followed by the best men, from Buddha in India and Jesus in Palestine, down to the Non-Resisters of our own time. It is, to seek to see the truth of things clearly, to speak it out fearlessly, and to endeavour to act up to it, leaving it to influence others as the rain and sunshine act upon the plants. The influence of men who live in that way spreads from land to land and from age to age. But there is another plan, much more often tried; which consists in making up one's mind what *other people* should do, and then using physical violence if necessary to make them do it.

People who act like that — Ahab, Attila, Cæsar, Napoleon, and the Governments and militarists of to-day — influence people as long as they can reach them, and even longer; but the effect that lives after them and spreads furthest, is a bad one, inflaming men's hearts with anger, with patriotism, and with malice.

These two lines of conduct are contrary the one to the other, for you cannot persuade a man while he thinks you wish to hit or coerce him.

This Fourth Commandment, as Tolstoy understands it,

is very precise and definite, and leads to extremely far-reaching conclusions. The words which follow: 'If any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. . . . Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn thou not away,' involve, he says, a complete condemnation of all legal proceedings in which force is actually or implicitly employed to oblige any of those concerned, whether as principals or witnesses, to be present and take part. This teaching involves nothing less than the entire abolition of all compulsory legislation, Law Courts, police and prisons, as well as of all forcible restraint of man by man. The rightness or wrongness of using physical force to restrain human beings is the crux of the whole matter, and it is a point I will deal with later.

The last of these Five Commandments is the most sweeping of all:

5. 'Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies . . . that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you . . . what do ye more than others? Do not even the Gentiles (foreigners, Germans, etc.) the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

The meaning of these Five Commandments—backed as they are by the example of Jesus and the drift and substance of his most emphatic teaching—is too plain, Tolstoy says, to be misunderstood; and it is becoming more and more difficult for the commentators and expositors to obscure it, though to many of them the words apply: 'Ye have made void the word of God because of your traditions.' What Jesus meant us to do, the direction in which he pointed us, and the example he set us, are unmistakable.

One great superiority of Tolstoy's interpretation over

the Orthodox, lies in the fact that his statement, whether it be a right or wrong presentation of the mind of Jesus, means something clear and definite, and links religion to daily life.

He discriminates between what we know and what we do not know, and makes no assertions about the personality of God, or His nature, or the creation and redemption of the world. For Tolstoy's statement that man owes a duty to a Higher Power which reveals itself through the workings of our reason and conscience, is a fact of personal experience, confirmed by the testimony of the Saints and Sages of all religions. Socrates and Emerson (and their predecessors and successors) faced by the necessity of supposing either that we live in a moral chaos where nothing is right or wrong, or in a moral order to which we can in some measure conform, chose the latter alternative, and became assured by experience that they had chosen right. By arriving at the conclusion that we are parts of a moral universe, and that only in so far as we discern that order and adjust ourselves to it, has life any meaning and purpose that is not defeated by death—Tolstoy reached the ultimate root of religion. Through strife and suffering to have found it by his own effort, and to have proclaimed it in the teeth of those who denounced him as heretic and atheist, as well as of those who sneered at him as a superstitious dotard, is an achievement that entitles him to rank among the prophets.

Superstitions—beliefs credulously accepted and passed on unverified—immensely hinder the spread of true religion. Yet such is the force of reaction, that few men educated in them can throw them off without, at least for a while, losing their consciousness of dependence upon and co-operation with the unseen Power that makes for righteousness. A man who has rejected his early beliefs but retains his old religious ardour, and is as eager to fight the battle of the Lord as he was when he still believed

that God wrote His Law on tablets of stone and handed them down to Moses on the top of a mountain, is as rare as he is valuable; and Tolstoy is such a man.

He has seen quite clearly that we cannot make the precise statements of the old theology, without landing ourselves in inextricable confusion; for, as J. S. Mill said, it is inconceivable that an all-powerful and all-good God can have created a world in which evil exists. Yet we believe that evil does exist, and that it is our duty to help to get rid of it.

Only by confining ourselves, as mathematicians do, to what is 'necessary and sufficient,' and by refraining from precise and definite statements concerning things we do not really know, can we get an intellectually honest religion. That there is a Moral Law, with which our natures can be brought at least partly into accord, is, as I have said, not a thing to be credulously accepted, but a matter of experience; and no fact in history is more obvious than that those who have most widely, profoundly, and enduringly influenced the minds and hearts of men, have firmly believed that they were co-operating with forces beyond the ken of our five senses.

In the early 'eighties, in Russia — that country of strange contradictions — alongside of the dominance of the official Church maintained by the police, and of the peasants' naïve devotion to the Church, a rampant Materialism prevailed as a consequence of the success of the Darwinian movement; and many highly educated men were fully persuaded that Science was about to reveal the origin of life, and, more than that, to explain the soul of man by the integration and disintegration of atoms. Under these circumstances it was as difficult for the views Tolstoy announced to obtain a hearing from the arrogant worshippers in the temples of Science, as from the scandalised followers of Mother Church.

That marks the greatness of his service. No pro-

gress was possible without an emancipation from the petrified ecclesiasticism that masqueraded as religion; and for any spiritual progress it was necessary that those intoxicated with the successes achieved by biological science should learn that we cannot obtain moral guidance for a race endowed with reason and conscience, by studying species comparatively destitute of the one and of the other. Almost alone, Tolstoy maintained the need of religion, while unflinchingly denouncing its existing forms.

It must not be supposed that he held a position identical with Dr. Stanton Coit and the Ethical Societies. The difference is, that Tolstoy recognised that man needs a clear philosophy of life; and wants to know *why* he approves and disapproves; and that to have validity, the answer to this 'Why?' must fit into a general view of life. The difference between Tolstoyism and the Ethical Movement is most plainly seen at times of crisis, say, for instance, when a war breaks out. No one who has read Tolstoy can doubt what his attitude will be at such a crisis; whereas the Ethical Movement, having no clear outlook on life, may drift anywhere. The prevalent opinion of the community in which it finds itself, is as valid a criterion of right and wrong as that Movement possesses. Tolstoy's 'Law of God' is often only too clear and definite, and too oblivious of the complexity of things. But it is as important for a religion as it is for a man, to have a back-bone; and Tolstoy's teaching is at any rate vertebrate.

In his treatment of the Bible, he ranks the Old Testament with the Scriptures of other nations: that is to say, he regards it as religious literature of varying quality, containing much that is excellent and some of the best literary art the world has ever produced, but much also that is crude, primitive, and immoral.

In the New Testament, he frankly dislikes and disapproves of much in the Epistles of Paul, whom he

accuses of having given a fatal bias to Christianity, which enabled the Church to ally itself with the State, and prevented the majority of men from understanding what Jesus meant. Paul's mind was of an administrative, organising type, foreign and repugnant to Tolstoy's anarchistic nature, which instinctively resents anything that, aiming at practical results, tolerates imperfect institutions.

Tolstoy is particularly indignant at Paul's approval of Government. 'The powers that be are ordained of God,' says Paul, and thereby provokes Tolstoy's indignant query: 'Which powers? Those of Pougatchéf<sup>1</sup> or those of Catherine II?' For Tolstoy maintains that man owes allegiance to God alone, and that it is impossible to yield obedience to earthly potentates without being ready, at their bidding, to act contrary to His laws. The alliance of Church and State under Constantine was, he holds, tantamount to the abandonment of Christianity, which he says is, by its very nature, opposed to all rule that employs physical violence.

The Gospels he regards as by far the most important Scriptures, and above all he values the words of Jesus. The parables (except one or two obscure ones) he holds to be exquisite works of religious art, and the Sermon on the Mount an expression of sacred and eternal truth.

Regarding a future life, Tolstoy's views have changed since, in the early 'eighties, he began to write of these things. At first he saw no reason for believing in a life after death; but since he has transferred his interest from personal matters to 'the service of God,' that is to say to matters of universal interest, the consciousness that his most real 'self' is part and parcel of the Infinite has grown so strong within him that now, for many years, it has appeared to him inconceivable that it should cease at the death of his body. But, observing carefully the distinction

<sup>1</sup> The rebel leader who for a while held the Vólga Provinces under his sway.



between what we know and what merely seems plausible or possible, he refrains from definite assertions as to the kind of existence that will succeed the death of our bodies. Whether there be a personal immortality; whether we shall merge into the Infinite as rain-drops fall into the ocean; whether reincarnation awaits us; whether groups of those who have been nearest in soul to one another will become one, or what other experience the future may have for various types of men—he holds to be beyond our ken, nor does he think it desirable or important that we should know these things. For whatever the future may have in store, we shall best prepare by helping to establish the Kingdom of God on earth, here and now.

His feeling is that which Whittier expressed in the verse :

‘I know not what the future hath of marvel or surprise,  
Assured alone that life and death His mercy underlies.  
And so, beside the Silent Sea I wait the muffled oar;  
No harm from Him can come to me on ocean or on shore.  
I know not where His islands lift their fronded palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift beyond His love and care.’

He is not interested in Spiritualism, nor even in Psychical Research. Of the former he speaks scornfully, holding that mankind, having made a useful discrimination between matter and spirit, should not be in a hurry to obliterate it. He maintains that the attempt to investigate the spirit-world on the physical plane, is based on a confusion of thought.

In treating of the Gospel miracles, Tolstoy is interested only in what moral they convey, for he feels much as Matthew Arnold did: that if one sees a man walking on the water, one may be perplexed, but not, therefore, assured that he is going to speak the truth; for ability to walk on the water is a physical matter, whereas truth-telling is spiritual.

He tells the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand somewhat as follows :

A popular preacher went out into the country, and the people flocked to hear him. They carried baskets with them, and probably did not take them empty. When meal-time came, Jesus (whose teaching was of love and service to one's neighbour) had the people arranged in groups of fifty, and set a practical example by distributing, not to his own group, but to the others, the few loaves and fishes his party had with them. Following as this did upon his teaching, it was imitated by the rest; with the result that none of the five thousand went hungry, and twelve basketsful of scraps were gathered up after all had eaten.

The lesson of the story, read in this way, is obvious; whereas, if we suppose that Jesus miraculously multiplied the loaves of bread and the fishes, he set us an example we cannot imitate.

For the most part, Tolstoy, regarding the miracles as mentally indigestible, simply omits them from his translations.

A suggestion Tolstoy does not refer to, but which goes far towards explaining some at least of the Gospel miracles, is that they grew out of the parables. The parable of the barren fig-tree which was to be hewn down if it did not bear fruit may, for instance, easily have given rise to the perplexing story of the fig-tree blasted by Christ's curse; and other miracles admit of similar explanation. This assumes, as Tolstoy himself does, that the Gospels are not supernaturally inspired.

The point of which the Christian Scientists make so much, namely the effect of religion on health, is one which Tolstoy disregards altogether. He is concerned about the soul, and believes that sickness, weakness, and death play a necessary and beneficent part in our spiritual progress. He is therefore neither impressed nor attracted by the promises Mrs. Eddy holds out of perpetual health.

No doubt he has chosen the main and chief side of

religion; but still, I think that by disregarding the Gospel stories of physical cures, he has missed what is neither an accidental, nor unimportant, nor altogether incredible part of the narrative: for unquestionably the mind influences the body, and even in the Tolstoyan Movement I have known nervous, irritable, and sickly people who, when their hearts were lit up and their minds illumined by Tolstoy's wide, generous, and noble ideas and ideals, became physically as well as mentally more robust than before.

Moreover, though it is a matter about which I know very little, my impression is that the investigations of the Psychical Research Society, as well as the records of many religious movements, indicate that there are forces at work about us, of which our present-day science is profoundly ignorant.

Returning to the consideration of Christ's Five Commandments, I would say that, striking as are Tolstoy's remarks on oaths, and valuable as is his protest against militarism (with which I shall deal in another chapter), it is possible that he may be mistaken as to what really was in the mind of Jesus when he said, 'Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black.'

Oaths were originally based on the idea that man could call on the Higher Powers to destroy him for speaking falsely. As soon as he no longer believes in such divine intervention, and does not think that if he stakes his head on the truth of what he says the gods will enforce the penalty, the oath loses its meaning and becomes objectionable.

The desirability of remaining quite free to do from day to day just what seems to us right at the time, unbound by agreement with our fellow-men, is again a point in Tolstoy's teaching that raises problems of great complexity, which, I think, he solves in too summary and rigid a

fashion. It is quite true, as he says, that much wrongdoing goes on in the world, not because those who commit it wish to do so, but because they are bound by the conditions of service they have accepted. It is evident that many who slay and destroy in war would never dream of doing so unless they had been ordered to by emperors, kings, or ministers who, in their turn, never would have ordered it had they themselves had to do the dirty work, or even to witness a one-thousandth part of the suffering they cause. The same is true of inhumanities committed under legal, business, and professional codes. But where Tolstoy errs, it seems to me, is in assuming that if every one refused to be bound by oath or agreement (for he sometimes spreads the doctrine out so that it condemns *any definite arrangement* among men as to their future work or future actions), things would go on better than they do at present.

One cannot escape Tolstoy's condemnation by merely adopting the method, optional in English Law Courts, of affirming instead of swearing, for it is the *being bound* by agreement, and therefore not being free to act as one's conscience may dictate, that he objects to. The promise to 'speak the whole truth' at a trial would appear to him objectionable, for a witness might suddenly feel that it was unkind to the prisoner to recount what really took place, or to expose the fact that another witness had lied.

An individualist conception of man's duty is largely prevalent in the East, and tinges the thought of many among ourselves; and the real clash of moral conviction between Tolstoy, who represents that thought, and let us say Gladstone—who represented in this matter the social frame of mind prevalent in the West—arises over the question whether it is not sometimes right to act, not as one would if matters lay solely between oneself and God, but in the way likely best to promote unity and

co-operation with one's fellows, and therefore ultimately to forward the establishment of the kingdom of heaven.

These words of Gladstone's show my meaning :

For years and years, well into advanced middle life, I seem to have considered actions simply as they were in themselves, and did not take into account the way in which they would be taken and understood by others. I did not perceive that their natural and probable effect upon minds other than my own formed part of the considerations determining the propriety of each act in itself, and not unfrequently—at any rate in public life—supplied the decisive criterion to determine what ought and what ought not to be done.

Tolstoy would have us regard only our duty to our conscience and to God. He assures us that if each man will do that, we shall think and act in unison, and with the best results for ourselves, our neighbours, our country, and the whole of mankind. I wish it were so! But neither my judgment nor that of others is infallible. If it were, how easy it would be to tread the path of progress in step, chanting songs we all understood and enjoyed! But the test of theory is practice; and in practice we find that only by adjusting one's actions to the limitations of one's fellows, and by their having regard to ours, can we advance together towards the aims we all desire. That is the justification of democracy; and that is why, by living in the main stream of humanity and not as wandering friars, men can best serve God.

One of Tolstoy's arguments on the matter is, that if a man once begins to consider what others are or are not prepared for, he quickly drops from the plane of principle to that of mere expediency, and lower still, to that of party or personal advantage; and so the salt in him loses its savour. Only by keeping his mind fixed on the divine Law, can man maintain his integrity, to which compromise is fatal.

But, again, the answer is that Tolstoy over-simplifies

life's problems. If good results really followed from each man taking his own line, how easy life would be! But we find that men who do so, lose touch with reality, and are in danger of falling from cloudland headlong to the bottom of the muddiest of earth's ditches; and so experience of life teaches us humility, and we come to believe that only by rubbing shoulders with the common man, and consorting with the publicans and sinners, can we achieve real and solid progress.

The principle which lies at the root of Tolstoy's Non-Resistance principle, namely the non-use of physical force, is one to be dealt with separately, later on. Here I will only say that, however true it may be that the *lessening* use of physical force in government, in industrial undertakings, in prisons, in schools, and in homes, is a sign of moral progress—there is yet no such clear moral distinction between the use of physical and mental violence as he supposes, and an impulsive blow may cause less anguish and imply less venom than a malevolent reproach.

Tolstoy is too rigid and too definite in these matters, and I do not think it is fair to assert that Jesus meant so much more than he said. 'Sweet reasonableness' has been rightly predicated of him, as he is depicted in the Gospels; but it belongs to that spirit to be aware that human nature and human affairs are complex and difficult and need constant care and much careful weighing; and that convenient as it would be to have a few stark and rigid rules as criterions for human conduct, yet to frame such rules, and to deduce enormously far-reaching conclusions from them, indicates a misapprehension of the real nature of things, and savours more of the spirit of some fierce Old Testament prophet than of him who would not break a bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax. The tests of conduct are not really clear or obvious.

In the path Tolstoy would have us pursue, short and simple as his exposition sounds, there lies, indeed, a very

grave practical obstacle. He says that if every one would obey God's Law, human law would be unnecessary, and we should all live in peace and amity. But even with every one really trying their best to obey that law, it would still remain true that the abolition of human tribunals would not lessen, but would enormously increase, their difficulties. For friction between well-intentioned people who have to work together, often arises not from any one wishing to do wrong, but from the fact that people see things differently. One man knows more, another less; one likes change, and another dislikes it; one is shy, over-cautious and slow, while another is rash and impulsive; this man readily understands what is said, that one generally misunderstands it; and what to one looks blue, to another looks green. If they are to work together, we must make it easy for them, by setting up an *external* tribunal; for *definiteness of arrangement* in the long run promotes the growth of good-will. A clear, firm law and a well-recognised trade-custom (harsh and faulty as our actual arrangements often are) are better for mankind than a haziness of arrangement that necessitates arguing out each point each time it crops up among each separate group of workers.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Where the great majority of individuals respect an external, man-made law, and consent to bind themselves by agreements limiting their individual freedom, and settle their disputes by appeals to a tribunal—society is able to exist; whereas, though well-meaning men of much more than average ability have tried the experiment again and again, communities conducted on anarchist principles never have endured.

The moral aspect of the case is more important even than its material side, for it is our duty to minimise the friction that arises when hard work has to be done, and experience shows that when men have to co-operate, and

their opinions clash, it is cruel and wasteful to condemn them to hammer out conclusions between themselves by argument. It is much more humane to let them—and even, in the ultimate resource, to compel them to—submit their disagreements to the arbitrament of a third party, as is done by our Courts of Law. Nothing frets and worries men more than an unsettled quarrel which they cannot get heard and adjudicated.

Another point to elucidate is, that the real objection to some of Tolstoy's doctrines—and especially to some of the tremendous and quite logical deductions he makes from those doctrines—is not, as people are fond of saying, that his ethics are too far ahead of us, and only suitable to a better race of men a thousand or more years hence; but, on the contrary, the objection is that Tolstoy has overlooked and disregarded the ethical bases which underlie the superstructure of modern government, law, custom, trade, and property. Such an intellectual misconception as this usually depends on some moral flaw; and since my aim is not to produce a panegyric, but to tell the truth as I see it, about this man—whom I so much respect and love, and to whom I am profoundly indebted—let me here say what the moral flaw vitiating this part of Tolstoy's work, seems to me to be. It is his impatience with the results achieved by human efforts in the past, and his distrustful hostility towards all movements which do not square with his own theories and with the commandments he has formulated. In a word, he trusts his own conclusions too implicitly, and distrusts the motives, efforts, and conclusions of other men too much.

Nevertheless, let it be borne in mind that the government, law and customs mankind has as yet evolved, are so defective that the onslaught of one who regards them as fit only for destruction may and does contain much that is worthy of careful attention. We of the Western world, who believe government, law, property and trade to be



useful, are far too apt to condone barbarities still habitual among us, on the ground that they are sanctioned by law and custom, or are necessary for business; and therefore no one should condemn Tolstoy's conclusions lightly or hastily, but should rather digest them: recognising that they contain much that is sound and wholesome.

His *Union and Translation of the Four Gospels*, a large work in three volumes, was written simultaneously with, or immediately after the completion of, his *Criticism of Dogmatic Theology*, and like that work it was printed in Geneva: the first volume in 1891, and the second in 1896. After appearing in Geneva, the Russian work was reprinted more carefully in three volumes, which were issued in Moscow in 1908. It had till then not been allowed to circulate in Russia, but after the Constitutional manifesto of November 1905 many books were tolerated for a while that had previously been prohibited.

In a preface, dated August 1891, to his *Four Gospels*, Tolstoy says:

My friends have offered to print this book composed by me ten years ago, and I have consented in spite of the fact that the work is far from being finished, and there are in it many defects. To correct and complete it is, I feel, beyond my power, for the concentrated, constant and enthusiastic spiritual effort of which I was conscious during the whole time I was writing it, cannot now be renewed. But I think that, such as it is, the book may be of use, if it communicates to others even a small part of the enlightenment I experienced while at work on it, and of my firm confidence in the truth of the path it revealed, in following which I experience more joy the further I go.

Some years later he again wrote of it:

At the risk of suggesting the hackneyed paradox that an author is always mistaken in his appreciation of his own works, I persist in saying that it is a thousand times more important than all I have ever written. And I know I am not mistaken

in this case, for it cost me the greatest and most joyous effort, was the turning-point of my whole life, and has served as the basis of all I have written since.

He set out in parallel columns the Greek text, the authorised Russian translation, and his own rendering. The order of the chapters and verses of the various Gospels he arranged in his own way, omitting anything he did not understand or disapproved of. The result is a striking and consistent narrative, representing the personality and teaching of Jesus as Tolstoy believes them to have been.

But can we rely on it? Has not every one who has made an independent study of Christ's teaching and personality, Strauss, Renan, Reuss, Hausrath, Farrar, Harnack, and all the rest of them, each produced a portrait and an account of his own, more or less plausible, but the validity of which remains doubtful because they all disagree, and the material they work on is so scanty? It consists of four little books, written we know not by whom, nor when, nor where, and which are not always quite in accord with one another. There is so much those booklets do not tell us at all, and so much that they do not tell us definitely or completely.

That is one of the secrets of the immense popularity of Jesus. Beyond what is clear in his teaching and example, there remains a wide domain in which each of us, Catholic or Anabaptist, Evangelical or Unitarian, can picture him as we like, and people differing radically from one another are all able to regard him as being on their side.

Be that as it may, Tolstoy, at any rate, felt certain that he understood just what Jesus meant, and knew just how Jesus lived and worked; and that the example is applicable for us all.

Lowell says that:

'New occasions teach new duties; time makes ancient good uncouth;

They must upward still and onward, who would keep abreast of Truth.'

But Tolstoy speaks of no new duties to meet new conditions: his cry is always, Back to Christ! and, Back to the simple, frugal life of the simple country peasant!

Certainly his presentation is vivid and lifelike, and it may be that Jesus really thought and felt just as Tolstoy says he did; but I doubt it. I admit that the views he attributes to Christ made themselves heard in the early Church, and, with sundry modifications and variations, reappeared again and again among the anti-ecclesiastical sects: the Bogomilites and Paulicians in the East, the Molokáns and Doukhobórs in Russia, and the Lollards, Moravian Brethren, Mennonites, Anabaptists and Quakers in the Western world.

But, as I have said, it seems to me that as Tolstoy expresses them, some of these doctrines are too rigid, too logical, too precise and too unqualified to be true; and in special cases, for instance in regard to Christ's injunction to 'Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's,' I cannot make the interpretation square with the evidence. I admit that if men are to give their hearts and souls and minds and strength to God, it does not leave much for Cæsar, except the minted coins; but even so, I do not see where any Gospel justification can be found for Tolstoy's injunction—repeated in many of his writings—to pay no taxes voluntarily, but to let the tax-collectors seize what they want, refraining from resistance merely as (on the Non-Resistance theory) one ought to refrain from resisting a robber.

Again, Tolstoy ignores the many indications in the Gospels that seem to show that Jesus expected the end of the existing order of things within the lifetime of his generation. Such an anticipation would surely influence his views on law, government and property, and should at least have been taken into account.

When Tolstoy set out to show what the Gospels really mean, he did not adopt the historic method of trying to

decide when and where the documents were produced, and studying the influences which tended to make them what they are, but taking them as they stand, he proceeded to interpret them in accord with his inner consciousness of right and wrong. But the task of showing that such and such texts must have meant so and so, led him unconsciously to trench on the domain of the historical student and to attempt the work of the scholarly critics, for which he hardly possessed the necessary equipment, or the tolerant, impartial, balanced accuracy of mind that such work requires. His performance is therefore that of an amateur of genius, pouring floods of light on certain questions, and rending many hoary sophistries to pieces by a strong inrush of common-sense, but, at times, stumbling over obstacles a less impetuous man might have avoided.

What helps to perplex a thoughtful reader of Tolstoy's work on the Gospels, is the necessity of considering not merely whether Jesus meant what Tolstoy says he meant, but whether, if he meant it, he was right or wrong in so doing. The ultimate, and much the most important question, is not, What did Jesus say? but, What is the real truth of the matter, apart from who said it?

I once mentioned to Tolstoy a charge that has been brought against him, to the effect that in his translation of the Gospels he takes unjustifiable liberties. He replied that he had studied Greek very seriously, and while doing the work had consulted first-rate scholars; but he added that he does not now attach the importance he then did to verbal niceties, and he admitted that sometimes, in his anxiety to counteract the bias he detected in the Orthodox Slavonic and Russian translations, he strained the meaning too much in a contrary direction. He compares his task to that of a man who has to demagnetise a steel bar by exposing it to an opposite influence.

At the period we have reached, early in the 'eighties,

Tolstoy regarded the teaching of Jesus as unique, and far above all other human wisdom. The force of many passages in Tolstoy's writings rests on citations of 'the very words of Christ himself'; and he draws deductions of vast importance from the precise phraseology of certain texts, and the exact etymology and context of certain Greek words. This opinion of his about Jesus changed very slowly and gradually, in a way not clearly indicated in his works, but of which he has told me in conversation. Chiefly by becoming better acquainted with the Eastern Scriptures (especially those of India and China) he ultimately reached the conclusion that what is vital lies at the root of all the great religions, which are separated and divided by superstitious accretions. Without ceasing to believe that the Gospels contain essential truth, and without ceasing to insist on his own interpretation of the teachings of Jesus as being in the main correct, he came to attach less and less importance to Christ's personality and to the exact phraseology and actual words of the Gospels.

How far he went in this direction is shown in a letter to Birukóf, written about the year 1900, after Tolstoy had read Professor Verus's *Vergleichende Uebersicht der vier Evangelien*. In this letter he says:

In this book it is very well argued (the probability is as strong *against* as *for*) that Christ never existed. The acceptance of this supposition or probability is like the destruction of the last outwork exposed to the enemy's attack, in order that the fortress (the moral teaching of goodness, which flows not from any one source in time or space, but from the whole spiritual life of humanity in its entirety) may remain impregnable.

To any one fresh from reading Tolstoy's works of 1880-1885, this may come with rather a shock; though it does not imply the least weakening of his faith in the reality of things unseen or in the importance of things spiritual.

A matter that all his readers must notice, is the stress he lays on the importance of manual labour; and on the moral duty of *doing* as contrasted with merely talking or writing. He extols the production of the necessities of life as of more primary importance than study, reflection, talk, reading, writing, or the organisation of other people's industry. Again and again he pours out the vials of his wrath on those who, on any pretext whatever, shirk the primary duty of supporting themselves and others. Yet, at the same time, we have his unstinted and enthusiastic laudation of the Sermon on the Mount, which after all was *talk* and talk preceded by forty days in the wilderness without labour to produce those necessities which Tolstoy is so greatly concerned about. Christ's sermon was, no doubt, worth incalculably more than the tables and benches he might have made; but by admitting that fact, we reduce Tolstoy's contention from the realm of the absolute to that of the comparative, which, after all, is perhaps its proper place.

I am much more concerned to draw attention to the value than to dwell on any flaws in Tolstoy's work; but he is so terribly strenuous, and has often caused such acute distress to tender-conscienced people who came under his spell, that perhaps it is well occasionally to let his over-strenuousness in one direction counteract his over-strenuousness in another.

From the two large works of which I have spoken, some smaller ones sprang. Out of discarded scraps of *A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology*, a scribe (of whom I shall have something to tell in a subsequent chapter) pieced together an article on *Church and State*, which circulated in manuscript, but can even now not be printed in Russia; and a tutor in the family, wishing to copy out for himself Tolstoy's work on the Gospels, had only time to write down the summary given of the various chapters, without the translation itself, and in this way *The Gospel in Brief* came into being. In a preface to that book,

Tolstoy referred to the danger he was running, and says that those who have concealed Christ's teaching from men and substituted their own misrepresentations, have only two courses open to them: either humbly to repent and abjure their lies, or to persecute those who expose them, including himself—'a fate for which, while finishing my book, I prepare with gladness, though with fear for my weakness.'

The *Gospel in Brief*, being shorter and simpler, has been much more widely read than the parent work from which it was extracted.

An aftermath of Tolstoy's studies of the Gospels, written as recently as 1908, is his book *The Teaching of Jesus*,<sup>1</sup> expressly designed for children.

A work written in 1884, which has had a large circulation in many languages, and gives the gist of the faith Tolstoy then held, is *What do I Believe?* It is very readable, and contains interesting autobiographical touches. In substance it is largely a recapitulation of what he had said in his *Four Gospels*. To give some idea of its style, and to amplify what I have already said about his understanding of the Second and Fifth of Christ's Commandments, I quote two passages.

Tolstoy explains that the verse in the Sermon on the Mount, translated in our Bibles: 'But I say unto you that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress,' really means: 'But I say unto you that every one that putteth away his wife, besides the sin of lustfulness which causes him to want to be rid of her, places her in a position in which she is liable to become an adulteress,' and should be so translated.

I reserve to a later chapter the comment I have to make on this matter; and pass on to the other quotation, which deals with patriotism:

Christ showed me that the fifth snare depriving me of

<sup>1</sup> Published, in English, by Harper and Brothers, London and New York.

welfare, is the distinction we make between our own and other nations. I cannot but believe this; and therefore, if in moments of forgetfulness a feeling of enmity may yet arise in me towards a man of another nationality, I can in quiet moments no longer help acknowledging that feeling to be a bad one. I cannot justify it as I formerly did, by acknowledging the superiority of my people over other nations, or by dwelling on the errors, cruelties, and barbarities of other nations. I cannot but try, at the very first reminder, to be even more friendly to a foreigner than to a compatriot. And beyond knowing that my disunion from other nations is an evil destructive to my welfare, I also know the snare which led me into that evil, and cannot, as I used to do, consciously and calmly promote it. I know that that snare lies in the mistaken conception that my welfare is only bound up with that of my compatriots, and not with that of all people. I now know that my unity with others cannot be destroyed by a frontier line, or by a government decree that I am to belong to this or that nation. I now know that all men, everywhere, are equals and brothers; and remembering all the evils I have committed, experienced, and witnessed, that resulted from national enmities, it is clear to me that the cause of it all was a coarse fraud—called patriotism and love of one's country.

Remembering my youth, I now see that the feeling of enmity to other nations, and of separation from them, never was natural to me, but that those evil feelings were artificially inoculated in me by an insensate education. I now understand the meaning of the words: Do good to your enemies: do to them as you would to your own people. You are all children of one Father. Be like Him: that is to say, make no distinction between your own folk and others, but behave alike to all.

I now understand that welfare is only possible to me on condition of my acknowledging my oneness with all people in the world without any exception. I believe this. And that belief has altered my valuation of what is good and bad, high and low. What seemed to me good and high, the love of fatherland, of one's own people or one's own Government, and



service rendered to them to the detriment of others, as well as military exploits, became to me repulsive and pitiable. What used to seem to me bad and shameful: such as a change of nationality, and cosmopolitanism, became to me, on the contrary, good and elevated.

If now, in moments of forgetfulness, I may still sympathise more with a Russian than with a foreigner, or may desire the success of the Russian State or people, I can, in quiet moments, no longer abet the snare which destroys both me and others.

I cannot recognise any States or nations, nor take part in any disputes between them, either by writing, or still less by serving any State. I cannot take part in any of those affairs which are based on distinctions between States: either in Custom-houses, and the collection of taxes, or in the preparation of explosives and weapons, or in any preparation of armaments, or in army-service—still less in war itself with other nations; nor can I assist people to do these things.

I have understood wherein my welfare lies. I believe in it, and therefore cannot do what certainly deprives me of it.

And not merely do I believe that I must live so. I also believe that if I live so, my life will acquire its only possible, reasonable and joyous meaning, not destructible by death.

Much in these views is true; but is not part of the truth left out of sight? I will try to answer that question further on in this book.

Years later, when his views had broadened and he was ready to generalise more sweepingly, he wrote a series of admirable essays on Religion, of which I will also speak in their proper place.

To sum up my own appreciation of Tolstoy's work on religion, I would say that I think, in the main, he clears the ground admirably of old superstitions, and keeps always in view the essential root of religion: the consciousness of the purposelessness of human life apart from dependence on, and co-operation with, a Something greater than our-

selves that makes for righteousness. But, like other ardent men bent on furthering the spiritual welfare of mankind, he sets up superstitions of his own in place of those he has overthrown. His superstitions are the 'principles' of Non-Resistance, No-Government, No-Human-Law, and No-Property.

The true theory of Non-Resistance, should, to my mind, deal primarily, not with a repudiation of the externalities of physical force or legal compulsion, but with furthering the inward and spiritual grace that sheds its warmth both on the evil and the good.

One of Tolstoy's great achievements was the way he succeeded in turning their own guns upon his opponents. Adherents of the Church often charge it against the unorthodox as a sin, that they do not believe the doctrines of the Church; but none of them do this more impressively than Tolstoy indicts all who neglect to use the reason God has given them, and credulously accept and repeat statements they have not tried to verify. Unfortunately he does not stop there, but employs the goad of moral indictment mercilessly to drive people willy-nilly into accepting his own views.

The skill with which, starting from the words of Christ, 'Resist not him that is evil,' he has framed a complete Christian-anarchist theory, is amazing. If one grants him his premises (which is just what one should not do) the whole process of deduction is remarkably logical and, for good or evil, the conclusions are of the utmost importance.

When reading Tolstoy, I am often reminded of Walter Bagehot, just because the two men are so unlike one another. There is a passage in *Physics and Politics* in which, after pointing out how the man of to-day has inherited from remote ancestors a tendency to act impulsively, immediately, and strongly, and to do much that he had much better have left undone, Bagehot goes on to say:

Even the abstract speculations of mankind bear conspicuous traces of the same excessive impulse. Every sort of philosophy has been systematised, and yet, as these philosophies utterly contradict one another, most of them cannot be true. Unproved abstract principles without number have been eagerly caught up by sanguine men, and then carefully spun out into books and theories, which were to explain the whole world. But the world goes clear against these abstractions, and it must do so, as they require it to go in antagonistic directions. The mass of a system attracts the young and impresses the unwary; but cultivated people are very dubious about it. They are ready to receive hints and suggestions, and the smallest real truth is ever welcome. But a large book of deductive philosophy is much to be suspected. No doubt the deductions may be right; in most writers they are so; but where did the premises come from? Who is sure that they are the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, of the matter in hand? Who is not almost sure beforehand that they will contain a strange mixture of truth and error, and therefore that it will not be worth while to spend life in reasoning over their consequences? In a word, the superfluous energy of mankind has flowed over into philosophy, and has worked into big systems what should have been left as little suggestions.

That applies exactly to Tolstoy's theory of Non-Resistance. Had he given half the time to considering the objections to it, that he has spent on advocating and extending it by further and further deductions—how much perplexity he would have saved his readers!

But I do not wish to close this chapter on a note of discord, and will therefore turn to a matter which is common ground to an enormous number of men.

Tolstoy prays regularly and ardently, but he does not believe in a personal God—that is to say, he is not prepared to make definite statements on a matter he cannot verify—and he disapproves of all petitions to the Deity

for material advantages or even for such more subtle gains as peace of mind or soul.

He says there are two kinds of prayer: the 'continual prayer' which consists in reminding oneself of the religious truths one has already grasped, and of striving to live up to the best one has perceived; and the 'occasional prayer' achieved most often in moments of solitude, when one feels drawn nearer to God and penetrates deeper than before into the spiritual nature of things.

Owing to the limitations of human thought and language, Tolstoy finds that in practice he uses a more personal note in his prayers than, in a philosophic argument, he would be inclined to defend.

Writing to a friend in 1901, he said :

I do not at all think that it would be good for everybody, or that it is necessary for all to do so; but I have long since formed the habit of praying every morning in solitude. And my prayer is like this :

*'Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy name is love, God is love. Whoso abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, He abides in us, and His love is fulfilled in us. If any one says: 'I love God,' but hates his brother, he is a liar—for how can he who loves not his brother whom he has seen, love God whom he has not seen? Brethren, let us love one another. Love is from God, and every one who loves is from God and knows God, for God is love.*

*'Thy Kingdom come. Seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and the rest shall be added unto you. The kingdom of God is within you.*

*'Thy will be done on earth as in heaven. Do I believe that I am in God, and God in me? Do I believe that my life consists in increasing love within me? Do I bear in mind that to-day I live, but to-morrow shall die? Is it true that I do not wish*

to live for personal desires and human fame, but only to fulfil the will of God ?

*'Not my will, but Thine be done ; and not what I wish but what Thou wishest, and not as I wish but as Thou wishest.*

*'Give us each day our daily bread.* My food is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to accomplish it. Turn away from thyself, take up thy cross each day, and follow Me ! Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find peace for your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden light.

*'And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* Your Father will not forgive you your offences unless each of you forgives his brother all his offences.

*'And lead us not into temptation.* Beware of temptations, desire, ambition, lack of love, gluttony, lust, and human fame. Do not thy deeds of mercy before men, but so that thy left hand may not know what thy right hand does. He that sets his hand to the plough and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of God. Rejoice when you are blamed and abused.

*'But deliver us from evil.* Beware of evil that springs from the heart : evil thoughts, murder (all ill-will towards men), theft (utilising what one has not earned), sexual relations and adultery (even in thought), bearing false witness and censuring.

*'We know that we have passed from death into life, if we love our brethren. Whoso loveth not his brother hath not eternal life within him.'*

That is how I pray every day, adapting to my affairs and to my mental condition the words of that prayer. Sometimes I pray more heartily than at other times.

But besides that prayer, I also pray when I am alone, and I read the thoughts of the Saints and Sages, not Christians only nor the ancients only, and I meditate, seeking out what in God's sight there is of evil in my heart, and trying to rid myself of it.

I also try to pray in active life, when I am among other people, and passions assail me. Then I try to remember what went on in my soul when I prayed in solitude, and the more sincere my prayer was, the more easily do I refrain from evil.

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## CHAPTER III

### LETTER TO THE TSAR

[1881] Income. Health. Assassination of Alexander II. Letter to Alexander III. Liberalism. Historic rôle of the Tsardom. Pobedonóstsef's letter. Reflections on hanging. Feelings when attacked by bear. Conflict with family and friends. Pilgrimage afoot to Óptin Monastery. An unjust Elder. At the Monastery. Father Ambrose. Diary. *What Men Live By*. Visit to Tourgénéf. Polónsky. Visit to Samára estate. Letters about the poor. The Molokáns. Pities his wife. A Cossack. Theatricals at Yásnaya. Tourgénéf dances. Move to Moscow. Soutáef. N. F. Fyódorof. Letters to V. I. Alexéyef. Stráhof. Birth of son, Alexéy. Appearance.

Tolstoy's new ideas diverted his attention completely from his former occupations of farming, and horse-, cattle-, pig-, and poultry-breeding. His affairs fell into disorder, for his stewards took advantage of his preoccupation; and the united revenue from the Yásnaya Polyána, Nikólsky, and the Samára estates, the capital value of which amounted altogether to not less than Rs. 500,000 or Rs. 600,000 (£50,000 or £60,000) shrank to some £500 a year; a sum quite insufficient to meet the expense of his large and growing family, the children's education, and the generous hospitality the Tolstoys were accustomed to extend to friends, relations and visitors. The  
1881 care and responsibility of managing the estates began to devolve on the Countess; who in addition to these cares was now troubled about her husband's health.

On 3rd February she wrote to her sister:

Lyóvotchka has quite overworked himself. His head is always aching, but he cannot tear himself away. Dostoyévsky's death produced a great impression on him and on us all: to have just become so celebrated and so generally beloved, and then to die! It has set Lyóvotchka thinking about his own death, and he has become more absorbed and more silent.

The same day she wrote to her brother in the Caucasus :

If you only knew and heard Lyóvotchka now! He has altered very much. He has become a most sincere and firm Christian. But he has gone grey, his health is worse, and he has become quieter and more depressed.

On 1st March (old style) 1881, Alexander II was assassinated in Petersburg by agents of the Revolutionary Executive Committee. The action was abhorrent to Tolstoy; but he was extremely troubled by the thought of the impending execution of five of the conspirators, among whom was a woman, Sophie Peróvsky. Many years later, he wrote to Birukóf :

The trial of the murderers and the preparations for their execution produced on me one of the strongest impressions of my life. I could not get rid of the thought of them, and not so much of them, as of those who were preparing to share in their murder: especially Alexander III. The happiness he might experience by pardoning them, was so plain to me! I could not believe they really would be executed, yet I feared and tormented myself on behalf of their murderers. I remember that with such thoughts in my mind I lay down on my leather sofa one day after dinner, and unexpectedly fell asleep; and in a dream, or half-dream, I thought of them, and of the murder that was in preparation, and I felt as clearly as though I had been awake, that not they were being executed but I; and yet that not Alexander III, the hangmen and judges, but I, was executing them; and in a nightmare-terror I awoke, and immediately wrote my letter to the Tsar.

The letter was quite in keeping with the religious reflections that absorbed Tolstoy at that time; and was



written in a far humbler tone than that in which, twenty years later, he reproved Nicholas II much as the Hebrew prophets of old reproved their kings. The letter actually sent differed somewhat from the draft Tolstoy retained, which—as the only version available—is here quoted from :

I, an insignificant, unrecognised, weak and worthless man, write to advise the Russian Emperor how to act in the most complex and difficult circumstances that have ever occurred. I feel how strange, improper, and audacious this is; and yet I write. . . .

I write from a country solitude, and have no certain information. What I know, I know from the papers and from rumours; and I may therefore be writing unnecessary futilities about what is really not at all the case. If so, pray forgive my self-confidence, and believe that I write not because I think highly of myself, but only because I am already so much to blame towards men, that I fear to be again at fault if I fail to do what I can and ought.

I will write, not in the usual tone of letters written to an Emperor—with flowers of servile and false eloquence that only obscure both feeling and thought—but simply as man to man.

My real feeling of respect for you, as man and Tsar, will be more evident without such adornments.

Your father, a Russian Tsar, a kind man who had done much good and had always wished his people well, has been inhumanly mutilated and slain, not by personal enemies, but by enemies of the existing order, who killed him for the supposed welfare of mankind.

You have succeeded to his place, and have before you these enemies, who poisoned your father's life and destroyed him. They are your enemies, for you are in your father's place, and for the sake of the imaginary general good they seek they must wish to kill you too.

He goes on to remark that in the Tsar's soul there must be a desire for vengeance on his father's murderers; and the thought that such vengeance is expected of him,

puts him in a position of terrible temptation; but that his primary duty is not as Tsar, but as man. By following the teaching of Christ, the temptation would be destroyed; and he quotes Matt. v. 43:

‘Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbours, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies . . . do good to them that hate you . . . and be sons of your Father which is in heaven. . . .’

Tolstoy goes on to admit that the world is far from the divine truth expressed in Christ’s teaching, and that it is audacious of him—who has yielded to far weaker temptations—to expect such strength of soul from the Tsar; yet he urges him to return good for evil. He says:

To forgive the most horrible offenders against human and divine laws, and to return them good for evil, will seem to many people at best idealism or insanity, and some will treat this advice as a sign of ill-intent. They will say: ‘Do not pardon, but extirpate the canker. Extinguish the fire.’ But one need only call on those who say so to prove their opinions, and the senselessness and ill-intent will be found to be on their side.

About twenty years ago a group was formed of people—mostly young ones—who hated the existing order of things and the Government. They imagined some other order, or even no order, and by all sorts of godless and inhuman methods, incendiary fires, robberies, and murders, they tried to destroy the existing order of society. For twenty years the struggle against this ferment has been carried on; but like mother-of-vinegar it continually breeds more and more, and it has not merely not been destroyed but grows larger, and these people have reached a most terrible state of cruelty and audacity, harmful to the course of life of the State.

Those who wished to fight against this plague by external means, have employed two methods: the one, that of cutting away by severity of punishment what was diseased and rotten;

the other, that of letting the disease take its course under regulation. The latter were the Liberal measures, intended to satisfy the disturbed, and calm the attack made by these hostile forces.

For those who regard the matter from the material side there are, he says, only these two ways: decisive methods of extermination (executions, police, the Censor, etc.) or Liberal indulgence (partial freedom, moderation in penalties, a Constitution, etc.). Both these remedies have failed, and therefore the performance of the will of God should not be regarded with contempt, even if considered merely as a cure for everyday ills. Besides which, both the old methods are bad for those who apply them, while the new method gives joy to a man's soul.

He continues :

The third advantage Christian forgiveness has over coercion or the artificial direction of harmful elements, relates to the present moment and has particular importance. Your position, and that of Russia, is now like that of a sick man at a crisis. One false step, the taking of a single harmful or unnecessary remedy, may quite destroy the patient. Just so at the present time, a single action in one or other direction—either vengeance for evil by cruel executions, or the calling together of Representatives—may involve our whole future. Now in this coming fortnight, while the criminals are being tried and sentenced, a step will be taken which will select one of three paths now before us: the path of suppression of evil by evil; the path of Liberal connivance (both of them paths that have been tried and lead nowhere); or the path of Christian performance of the will of God by the Tsar as a man.

Monarch! By some fatal and terrible error, fearful hatred arose in the souls of the Revolutionaries against your father, which led them to commit a terrible murder. That hatred may be buried with him. The Revolutionaries might blame him, though unjustly, for the death of some dozens of themselves. On your hands is no blood. You are the innocent victim of your position. You are pure and innocent before yourself and

before God; but you stand at the parting of the ways. A few lays, and if those triumph who say and think that Christian ruth is mere talk, and that in political life blood must be spilt and death must reign, you will pass for ever from that blessed condition of purity and life in God, and will enter on dark paths of State-necessity, justifying everything—even the infringement of the law of God and man.

If you do not pardon, but execute the criminals, you will have uprooted three or four out of hundreds; but evil breeds evil, and in place of those three or four, thirty or forty will grow up, and you will have let slip for ever the moment which is worth a whole age—the moment when you might have fulfilled the will of God, but did not do so—and you will pass for ever from the parting of the ways where you could have chosen good instead of evil, and you will sink for ever into that service of evil, called the Interest of the State.

Forgive! Return good for evil, and from among a hundred evil-doers dozens will turn from the devil to God; and the hearts of thousands and millions will quiver with joy and emotion at the example shown of goodness from a throne, at a moment so terrible for the son of a murdered father.

Monarch! If you were to do this: were to call these people and give them money, and send them away somewhere to America, and write a manifesto headed with the words, 'But I say, Love your enemies,' I do not know how others would feel, but I, poor subject, would be your dog and your slave! I should weep with emotion every time I heard your name, as I am now weeping. But what do I say?—'I do not know how others'!—I know that at those words kindness and love would pour forth like a flood over Russia. . . .

By killing and destroying the Revolutionaries one cannot struggle against them. Not their number is important, but their ideal. To struggle against them one must struggle spiritually. Their ideal is a sufficiency for all, and equality and freedom. To struggle against them, one must oppose their ideal by one that is superior to theirs and includes it. In France and England the struggle against them is also going on, and is also fruitless.

There is only one ideal which can be opposed to them: the

one from which (misunderstanding it and blaspheming it) they start: the ideal which includes their own—the ideal of love, forgiveness, and the return of good for evil. One word of forgiveness and Christian love, spoken and carried out from the height of the throne, and the path of Christian rule which is before you, waiting to be trod, can destroy the evil which is corroding Russia. As wax before the fire, all Revolutionary struggles will melt away before the man-Tsar who fulfils the law of Christ.

Except in regard to its attitude of humble loyalty, that letter represents very much the attitude Tolstoy maintains to this day towards public affairs. It asserts that what is right—the law of Christ—is clear, indubitable, known to us all, and immediately applicable. It shows indifference towards, and disapproval of, Constitutional Government, and a strong inclination to over-simplify political and social problems. It also shows—what is very attractive—his assurance that the moral criterion is superior to every other; and it expresses his abhorrence of the slaughter of men by men. It is his sincerity, his interest in the great questions that affect our lives, and his intensity of feeling and expression, that make Tolstoy so interesting, even when he deals with politics; but in relation to politics Tolstoy, like the Slavophiles, represents a phase of thought which even in the East is now beginning to pass away and yield to the Western conception, that man must shape his own fate, and must expect no God to grant him good government unless he helps himself thereto, and resolutely tackles rough political work which at first may often seem to yield him nothing but soiled hands. I quite believe that Alexander III would have acted nobly and wisely had he pardoned the conspirators. Certainly many Russians would have shared Tolstoy's feeling, and with whole-hearted devotion would have adored the merciful Tsar. But no act of pardon, however generous, could evade the ultimate issue: Was Russia still to be ruled autocratically, or were the people to begin

to have a say in shaping the conditions under which they live?

To forgive the Tsaricides would have been excellent had Alexander III been inclined to limit his autocratic power; but *that* was the point of supreme importance.

It is curious to note in Tolstoy's letter the assumption that Liberal methods had already been sufficiently tried in Russia, and had completely failed. It is true that many Liberal measures had, with the consent of the Tsar and in his name, been passed in the early 'sixties. Their record forms one of the most pleasing pages in Russian history. It is also true that they were succeeded by a long period of reaction, and were far from fulfilling the ardent expectations of their promoters. But why speak of them as having failed? Would it not be truer to say that they were but the commencement of a path that has to be followed much further, before one can reach the fertile land to which it leads?

The history of Russia has been, that broken up into small states she fell an easy prey to Tartar hordes who swept over her, burning, slaying, and outraging. Slowly the Grand Dukes of Muscovy spread their dominion until, while still nominally tributary to the Tartar Khans, they made themselves practically masters of Central Russia. Then they threw off the yoke, and claimed the title of Tsar or Cæsar. And long after the Tartars had ceased to be terrible, the Tsardom was still essential to hold Russia together, and to enable her to withstand not only the Turks, but also the Poles, to whom in 1612 Moscow was in thralldom; the Swedes, who in 1709 were in the heart of Central Russia at Poltava; and the French, during whose invasion in 1812 Moscow again passed out of Russia's control. In those times the *quantity* of Government may well have seemed more important than its quality. The essential thing was to have a centre round which all the forces of the country could gather; for any native rule was

preferable to a foreign yoke. The Tsardom afforded such a centre; but it may be compared to a suit of mail donned by a youth to save himself from assassination. After the danger has passed, if the growing lad still fears to abandon his cramping suit of mail, it ultimately proves as fatal to him as the dagger of an assassin. After Russia became a great European Power, the task of governing her score of different races, with different languages, different religions, and different customs, completely outgrew the ability of any Autocrat—whether he wished to rule according to the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount or not. Rash and violent as was their action, and little as they foresaw the effects the Tsar's assassination would have, what Sophie Peróvsky and her fellow-conspirators aimed at was the establishment of a Government in which the people would be allowed to make their wants heard, and under which the ever-growing abuses of the administration could be constitutionally dealt with. To spare five conspirators while continuing to deny elementary liberty to 120,000,000 subjects, was not good enough. That the case could not be so met was shown by the fact that the conspirators themselves cared more for the abolition of the irresponsible power of the Autocrat than they did for their own lives.

Having written his appeal, Tolstoy gave it to Stráhof to hand to Pobedonóstsef, formerly Alexander III's tutor and now Head of the Holy Synod, who had great personal influence with the Tsar. Tolstoy also wrote to Pobedonóstsef asking him to hand the document to the Tsar. After reading the appeal, Pobedonóstsef declined to have anything to do with it, and returned it to Stráhof. The latter then entrusted it to Professor K. Bestouúzhef-Rúmin, who handed it to the Grand Duke Sergius, and so it ultimately reached the Tsar, who said that he would have pardoned the conspirators had the attack been directed against himself, but did not consider he had a right to pardon his father's murderers. This reply was informally

conveyed to Tolstoy. Pobedonóstsef did not answer the letter addressed to him till 15th June, long after the Tsaricides had been hanged. He then wrote :

Do not be offended, most respected Count Leo Nikoláyevitch, first, that I have left unanswered till now the letter N. N. Stráhof handed me from you. This occurred not from impoliteness or indifference, but from the impossibility of finding one's bearings quickly in the bustle and confusion of thought and occupations that overwhelmed me, and have not ceased to overwhelm me, since 1 March.

Secondly, do not be offended that I avoided the performance of your commission. In such an important affair everything must be done according to one's faith. And after reading your letter I saw that your faith is one, and mine and that of the Church another, and that our Christ is not your Christ.

Mine I know as a man of strength and truth, healing the feeble ; but in yours I thought I discerned the features of one who is feeble, and himself needs to be cured. That is why, in accord with my faith, I could not fulfil your commission.

Yours with sincere respect and devotion,

K. POBEDONOSTSEF.

Speaking to Feinermann several years later about the executions of the Tsaricides, Tolstoy said :

Repaying deeds of horror by deeds of horror begets deeds of horror. I remember with what a shudder in my soul I heard of the impending execution of the five accomplices in that really terrible, shocking, and inhuman deed. I could not sleep. I could not rest anywhere ; I wished to go to Petersburg and act as people used to act in olden times : go to the Tsar and beg and implore him face to face, not to let the execution take place. Something inexpressibly powerful called on me to do so, but weakness caused me to act in the modern way : I wrote a letter, and forwarded it through some acquaintances. It is true that I tried to pour out my whole soul in that letter, but it did not express anything like what I felt.

Afterwards, when I heard of what had been done, I could



not drive from my eyes those hanging, attenuated figures. The image of the woman Sophie Peróvsky especially oppressed me. I pictured clearly to myself how she placed her head in the noose, and how she involuntarily adjusted it, moving her head till the noose lay under her windpipe; and then, when the stool had been pushed from beneath her feet and the cord pressed the soft gristle of her throat tight to the hard vertebræ of her nape, she suddenly felt a rush of blood to her head and writhed with her whole body. . . . I suffocated, and repeatedly swallowed saliva to assure myself that my throat was not yet squeezed up. . . . I saw those protruding eyes fixed in amaze on the inexorable nearness of something terrible, and the blue face under the black cap. . . . The horror of it all! The horror! . . .

Men forget one thing. The dreadful, monstrous, cruel things they do to others strike quite a different spot to the one they aim at. It is wonderful how the soul of the victim is protected from these cruelties. At the moment when the most cruel thing of all, death, draws near, and you already seem to feel its breath,—all your sufferings melt away as darkness melts before the dawn.

This is, so to speak, His protection. He has arranged it so that at the very moment when it seems to men that they are inflicting on another the most terrible of all things, that terrible thing no longer exists for the victim, but recoils entirely upon those who inflict it. It is amazing, but true.

I remember once, when a bear attacked me and pressed me down under him, driving the claws of his enormous paw into my shoulder, I felt no pain. I lay under him and looked into his warm, large mouth, with its wet, white teeth. He breathed above me, and I saw how he turned his head to get into position to bite into both my temples at once; and in his hurry, or from excited appetite, he made a trial snap in the air just above my head, and again opened his mouth—that red, wet, hungry mouth, dripping with saliva. I felt I was about to die, and looked into the depths of that mouth, as one condemned to execution looks into the grave dug for him. I looked, and I remember that I felt no fear or dread. I saw with one eye, beyond the outline of that mouth, a patch of blue sky

gleaming between purple clouds roughly piled on one another, and I thought how lovely it was up there. . . .

I often remembered that moment afterwards; and now whenever I think of death, I picture that situation to myself, because I have never been nearer to death than then. I recall it, reflect on it, make comparisons, and see that death—real, serious and all-absorbing death—is, thank God, not dreadful. Everything becomes torpid then, and all that causes fear ceases to growl above one's head, and one's soul is easy and at peace.

Probably the lamb crunched by a wolf, the bird in the serpent's mouth, travellers attacked in a forest, and men from under whose feet the hangman pushes the stool, feel the same.

It was not merely with men such as Pobedonóstsef—whose name soon became as closely identified with the oppression practised by the Orthodox on the dissenters, as Tolstoy's was with the struggle for freedom of conscience—that Tolstoy's new views brought him into conflict. He was ardent in his new faith, and it often led him to be very severe on the ordinary conduct and occupations of his fellows. By natural temperament he was strenuous, and he always expresses himself emphatically; yet it was part of his new religion to live in amity with all men, to give no offence, and to be humble and forgiving. There is abundant evidence that the conflict was fierce between his desire to propagate his faith and his wish not to offend those who did not share his views, and that even in private life he was torn asunder by conflicting influences.

In his Diary, in the staccato style there adopted, he notes on 5th May 1881 :

One's family is one's flesh. To abandon one's family, is the second temptation: to kill oneself. But do not yield to the third temptation. Serve not the family, but the one God. One's family is the indicator of the place one must occupy on the economic ladder. It is one's flesh: as a weak stomach needs

light food, so a pampered family needs more than a family accustomed to privations.

We shall meet many indications of this same struggle later on, as well as of his efforts to be of service to those less favourably situated than himself.

On 7th May, after visiting the local prison, he notes :

I was in Toúla. In the prison fifteen Kalouga peasants have been kept more than a month for having no passports. They ought to be sent to Kalouga, and from thence to their homes. But for two months they have been detained, on the pretext that the Kalouga prison is over-full.

On 12th May he again wrote to Fet; and this was apparently the last letter of the long and intimate correspondence from which I have quoted so extensively :

I remember when I received your letter, dear Afanásy Afanásyevitch, how surprising it seemed that you should look so far ahead—to 12 May. It seemed specially strange, for on that day I had heard of Dostoyévsky's death. But now the 12 May is here, and we are still alive. Please pardon my silence, and do not punish my wife and me by cancelling your visit to us. Please do not be angry with me. I have greatly overworked myself, and have grown much older this year; but have not to plead guilty to any change in my attachment to you.

On 15th May he again visits the prison and notes the 'terrible stench' there. He then adds :

In the evening Pisaref and Samárin. Samárin with a smile : 'They [the Terrorists] ought to be hanged !' I wished to hold my tongue and ignore him; I wished to pitch him out by the scruff of his neck. I spoke out. 'The State ! . . . But I care not what game you play, so long as it is not one that causes evil. . . .'

21 May.—A dispute. Tánya, Seryózha and Iván Miháyl-ovitch. 'Good is relative,' i.e. there is no goodness. Only instincts.

22 May.—Continuation of conversation about the relativity

of goodness. The good I speak of, is that which we consider good for ourselves and for all. . . .

28 May.—Fet all day.

29 May.—Talk with Fet and my wife. 'The Christian teaching is not practicable.' 'Then it is stupid?' 'No, but not practicable.' 'But have you tried to practise it?' 'No, but it is not practicable!'

In some of the letters quoted, the reader may have detected signs that the cordial intimacy between Fet and Tolstoy was waning. From this time forth they drifted widely apart. The Christian teaching had brought, if not a sword, at least estrangement. In a life which has been singularly successful, noble and useful, and which, as Kropótkin says, has made Tolstoy 'the most touchingly loved man in the world,' there is this tragedy: that his zeal for the Gospel he discovered, and which he is convinced will save the world, has alienated him from many friends, brought discord into his family life, strained at times his relations with his wife, and long left him spiritually alone.

On 10th June he set out on a second pilgrimage to Óptin Monastery; and this time he went on foot, wearing bast-shoes of peasant make. He was accompanied by his servant, Sergéy Arboúzof, part of whose duty it was to give ten or fifteen copecks (3d. or 4d.) to each beggar they met on the way.

As was his custom when away from home, Tolstoy wrote frequently to the Countess. The day after starting, he wrote from the village of Krapívny as follows:

I got here worse than I expected, having blistered my feet. I slept, and feel better in health. Here I have bought hemp shoes, and shall get along better in them. It is very pleasant, useful and instructive.

You cannot imagine how new, important and useful for the soul (for one's view of life) it is to see how God's world lives: the real, big world, not the one we have arranged for ourselves

and out of which we do not emerge even when we travel round the world. . . . I take great care of myself, and to-day bought grapes for my stomach's sake. If you had seen a girl of Mary's age [ten years old] where we slept last night, you would have fallen in love with her. She says nothing, understands everything, is always smiling, and no one looks after her. The chief, new feeling, is that of recognising oneself, and being in the eyes of others, only what I am and not what I plus my belongings am. To-day a peasant in his cart overtook us. 'Eh, old fellow! Where is God taking you?' 'To Óptin.' 'Are you settling down to live there?' And so we began a conversation. . . . If only the big and little children don't upset you. If only the visitors are not unpleasant; if only you yourself are well; if only nothing goes wrong; if only. . . . I do everything that is right and you also, then all will be well!

At night the travellers put up at any hut they chanced to come to, whose master or mistress would take them in.

One evening they arrived at a large village, and stopped at the house of the Elder and asked for a *samovár*. The Elder was paying some twenty-five peasants who had been making bricks for him, and apparently was not paying them fairly; yet when he had finished, he said to them:

'And now stand us a bottle of *vódka*. Here are some pilgrims who will have a drink with us!'

On hearing this, Tolstoy went out into the outhouse, and said to Arboúzof:

'What a wretched man that Elder is, preying on his own peasants!'

The Elder, who was half-drunk, also came into the outhouse and sprawled there.

An old woman with a baby in her arms came and bowed at his feet, and implored him

'Nazár Vasilyevitch, have pity on me, a poor widow, or I must just lie down and die!'

The Elder only grinned at her, and the woman began begging still harder, till the Elder shouted at her:

‘Clear out of my sight! If I see another trace of you, I will send for the clerk!’

Tolstoy called the woman to him and asked what was the matter. She told him she had had five sons, and five shares of the Communal land; but that now the Commune had taken three shares from her, and wanted to take her homestead also.

Tolstoy made a note of the case, and pacified the woman, promising to see what he could do for her.

At this the Elder began to shout at him, asking what he meant by it; and finished up by demanding to see his passport.

Arbouzof produced Tolstoy’s passport from his bundle; but the Elder said:

‘I can’t read it without spectacles. Show it to my son Vasily, who is in the house. He has been a coachman in Petersburg, and can read well.’

When Vasily had read, ‘Count Leo Nikoláyevitch Tolstoy,’ he whispered something in his father’s ear, and the latter instantly disappeared, the house became empty, and even the vodka the peasants had brought, vanished.

Arbouzof adds:

When the *samovár* was ready, Vasily invited us into the hut, where there was no one left but his mother. The Count asked what had become of the Elder and all the workmen. The woman replied that her husband had driven off to the neighbouring District Court, and the workmen had gone to their homes.

‘What a pity it is they choose such Elders!’ said the Count to me, ‘who spoil everything for themselves and get into trouble!’

The woman brought us a jug of milk and ten eggs. The Count invited her and her son to drink tea with us, but they declined. I asked her to bring a bundle of straw, that we might sleep on the floor; but she offered us her own bed, which the Count declined. After tea and supper, we lay down

to sleep; and there was no one in the hut except the old woman and her son.

Next morning I asked to have the *samovár* heated, and when all was ready I woke the Count. . . . We drank tea, ate, and paid the hostess; though she did not wish to accept anything. At parting the Count said to Vasily that the way his father was going on would probably lead to bad results.

Next evening, in the twilight, it thundered and lightened, and the travellers were overtaken by a severe storm. Tolstoy was seized with severe spasms in his stomach, and, wet through, lay down on the wet ground and said: 'I am at death's door!' When, with much difficulty, he got to a house, the owner refused to let them in, and they had again to set off in the dark, but at last found shelter and a friendly welcome.

They reached the Monastery when the bell was ringing for supper, at 6 o'clock in the evening of the fifth day of their journey. So humble was their appearance that they were not admitted to the better-class refectory, but were sent to the room where the dirtiest and most ragged tramps ate. Arboúzof says:

I looked at the Count; but he, not at all disdainful of his neighbours, ate with pleasure, and drank some *kvás*, which he seemed to like very much.

After supper we went for the night to the third-class hotel. The monk in charge, seeing that we wore bast-shoes, did not give us a room to ourselves, but sent us to the common night-dormitory, where there was all sorts of dirt and insects.

'Father,' said I to the monk, 'here is a rouble for you—only let us have a room.'

He consented, and gave us a room, saying that there would be three of us in it. The third man was a cobbler. I got a sheet and a small pillow out of my bundle, and arranged a bed for the Count on the sofa. The cobbler lay on the other sofa, and I made myself up a shakedown on the floor, not far from the Count. The cobbler soon fell asleep and snored loudly, so that the Count jumped up in alarm, and said to me:

‘Sergéy, wake that man and ask him not to snore.’

I went to the sofa, woke the cobbler, and said :

‘My good fellow, you snore very loud and are startling my old man. It frightens him to have some one snoring in the same room with him.’

‘Well then, do you want me not to sleep all night, for the sake of your old man?’

However, it so happened that the cobbler snored no more.

Next day they rose at nine and drank tea. Arboúzof went to Mass, while Tolstoy went to see how the monks mowed, ploughed, and carried on their handicrafts.

Visiting the Monastery bookshop to see what spiritual food was supplied to the people, he met an old woman asking for a copy of the Gospels for her son. The monk in charge replied that it was not a suitable book for such folk, and proceeded to offer her descriptions of the Monastery and of miracles performed by the Saints. Thereupon Tolstoy purchased a copy of the Gospels for Rs. 1.50 [3s.] and gave it to the woman, telling her to read it and to let her son read it.

The monk was amazed that a man dressed like a pauper should be so free with his money, and sent to inform the Archimandrite, who despatched another monk to make inquiries. This monk happened to be from Yásnaya Polyána, and at once recognised Tolstoy; much to the latter’s regret.

The news that Tolstoy was in the Monastery soon spread, and the Archimandrite sent for him. When he found that he had been recognised, Tolstoy said to Arboúzof :

‘Since they have found me out, there is no help for it! Give me my boots, and another blouse. I will change my things and go to see the Archimandrite and Father Ambrose.’

Before the Count had had time to change, two monks came to take his things to the first-class hotel, in which everything was upholstered with velvet. The Count long declined to move, but at last consented.



He had a four-hours' conversation with Father Ambrose, and, if we may trust Arboúzof's evidence, was delighted with him, and afterwards remarked :

'Father Ambrose is quite a holy man. I talked with him, and my soul felt light and joyous. When one speaks with such a man, one really feels the nearness of God.'

The following extracts from Tolstoy's Diary relate to the days immediately after his visit to Óptin, from whence he returned by train and carriage.

In his Diary on 26th June 1881, he notes :

Very many poor. I am not well. Have not slept, nor eaten anything dry for four days. Have tried to feel happy. It is difficult, but possible. I am conscious of making progress towards it.

28 June.—A talk with Seryózha about God, in continuation of yesterday's. He and they think that to say, 'I do not know that, it can't be proved, I don't need it,' shows wisdom and education. Whereas it shows ignorance. 'I do not know any planets nor axes on which the earth turns, nor those unintelligible ecliptics, and I do not wish to accept such things on faith; and I see that the sun and the stars move.' Yes; to prove the revolution of the earth, and its course, and mutation, and the precession of the equinox, is very difficult, and much remains obscure and hard to imagine; but the advantage is that all is brought into unison. So it is with moral and spiritual matters: the great thing is to bring into unison the questions, What to do? What to know? and What to hope? All humanity strives to bring these to unison. And suddenly, to divide what has been brought into unison, is considered by some people a service to boast of. Whose fault is it? Men have carefully taught them theology and Church rites, knowing in advance that these would not stand the tests of maturity; they have taught them much knowledge, totally disconnected. And they are all left without unison, with disjointed knowledge, and think this a gain!

Seryózha admitted that he loves the life of the flesh and believes in it. I am glad to have the question clearly put. . . .

We had an immense dinner with champagne. The two Tányas [his sister-in-law and daughter] were dressed up. Girdles costing five roubles on each of the children. While we were still at dinner, a cart was already starting for the picnic, and passed among the peasant carts that were carrying people tortured by overwork.

I went to them—but had not the strength to speak out.

3 July.—I cannot get over my illness. Weakness, indolence, and sadness. Activity is essential, its aims: enlightenment, amendment, and union. Enlightenment I can direct towards others, amendment towards myself; union with the enlightened and amending.

6 July.—Talk with X. An economic Revolution not only may, but must, come. It is wonderful it has not come already.

To a Children's Magazine the Countess's brother was at this time publishing, Tolstoy contributed *What Men Live By*, the precursor of a long series of admirably simple and beautiful stories that were primarily intended for peasants and children, but have become popular among all classes and in all languages. The Oxford University Press has published a collection of them, entitled *Twenty-three Tales*, in its World's Classics Series. Of these stories, Carmen Sylva, Queen of Roumania, wrote:

Of all the works this great man and artist has written, his short stories have made the strongest impression upon me. I regard them as the most perfect tales ever written. In these popular stories, thought of the highest purity reaches us, which to my mind is far more eloquent than the subtlest style. The highest art is presented; and like Dante, Shakespeare and the Bible, it will survive all time, for here is Eternal Truth. It surprises me that people speak more of the so-called greater works of Tolstoy than of these little gems, which are quite unique. If Tolstoy had written nothing but these short stories, he would still rank among the greatest men of the world. When writing them he cannot have had a single base thought, but must have been a friend of suffering humanity and a real Christian.

What men live by, is kindness and love. The tale was told to Tolstoy by the itinerant story-teller mentioned in the first volume of this *Life*; but the idea of an angel sent to earth by God, and whose actions men cannot understand, is one that has been used a thousand times.

The Memoirs of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society for 1882 contain a paper by my friend, W. E. A. Axon, tracing the literary history of Parnell's poem, *The Hermit*, which is based on the same theme. He points out that Parnell took the story from Henry More, who borrowed it from the moralist, Percy Herbert, and it can be traced back through the centuries. Antoinette Bourignon has made a French story of it, which Albert of Padua Italianised. Luther refers to it in his *Table Talk*, and it is in the *Scala Coeli* Collection of the Dominican monk, Jean le Jeune, dating from early in the fourteenth century. It is to be found in the famous *Gesta Romanorum*, and in the Appendix to the *Vie des Pères*, where it is entitled *Eremité and the Angel*. In the first half of the thirteenth century it appears in a French religious poem, and in the sermons of Jacques de Vitri. Among more modern writers, Voltaire used the story in *Zadig*, and it appears in Pauli's Collection, *Schimpf und Ernst*.

The story appears also in various forms in the *Talmud*, the *Apocrypha*, the *Koran*, and the *Arabian Nights*, as well as in the Byzantine, South-Slavonic, and Russian versions of the *Lives of the Fathers*.

Of Tolstoy's version of this universally popular tale, De Vogüé expressed the general opinion when he said it was *d'une grâce délicieuse*. Tolstoy himself feels scruples about having used it, for he always dislikes supernatural machinery, and an angel plays a part in the tale. Of all Tolstoy's works there is none probably that has received such general approval as this; but *de gustibus non est disputandum*, and as if to illustrate that there is nothing in art that is universally acceptable, Mr. Edmund Gosse (choosing the

occasion of Tolstoy's Eightieth Birthday Celebration) contributed an article to the *Contemporary Review*, in which he remarked that: '*What Men Live By* is characteristic of the later period when the greatest novelist of Russia voluntarily sank to the level of a purveyor of Sunday-school prize-books, which ought to be issued in cheap green and pink bindings, with plenty of tinsel on the sides'—a remark worthy to figure in future collections of literary and critical curiosities.

Tourgénéf had, at the Countess's request, contributed to her brother's Magazine his touching story *The Quail*; and on 9th July Tolstoy went to visit him. Having mistaken Wednesday for Thursday, he arrived a day too soon and, finding no conveyance awaiting him at the station, hired a trap to drive to Tourgénéf's house. The driver lost his way in the dark, and they did not reach their destination till one o'clock in the morning.

Though Tolstoy was not expected, neither Tourgénéf nor the poet Polónsky who was staying with him, had gone to bed. Polónsky was writing in his room when horses were heard outside, and on going into the hall he saw a sunburnt peasant in a blouse with a leather belt, paying the driver. He looked at him, but did not recognise that the peasant was Tolstoy, until the latter raised his head and, looking at him inquiringly, said: 'Is that you, Polónsky? . . . ?'

The three writers at once began an animated conversation which continued till three in the morning. Tourgénéf at times became so excited that even his neck and ears went quite red. Tolstoy's tone and manner struck Polónsky (who had not seen him for twenty years) as surprisingly soft and of winning simplicity, though he still maintained his views with firmness.

'He seemed to me,' said Polónsky, 'to be reborn: imbued with a different faith and love. . . . He did not impose his views on us, and listened quietly to Tourgénéf's

objections. In a word, he was no longer the Count I had known in the days of his youth.' Tolstoy recounted to them many interesting incidents of his recent pilgrimage to Óptin.

Next day, an hour before dinner-time, Tourgénéf was informed that his man-cook was drunk, and that there was no one to prepare the dinner. At first this news perplexed him, for not only was he among the most hospitable of mortals, but good eating was a matter to which he attached great importance. At last he decided to cook the dinner himself and, rubbing his hands, began to recount how he would cut up the carrots and chop the meat to make cutlets. Bent on this achievement, he set off to the kitchen, only to be turned back by one of his servants, Zahár, who explained: 'That's not your business! . . . Go away, and God be with you! We will get dinner ready without you.'

Tolstoy's note in his Diary, after this visit, runs:

9-10 *July*.—At Tourgénéf's. Kindly Polónsky, quietly occupied with art and literature, not judging others and poor, was tranquil. Tourgénéf fears the name of God, but acknowledges Him. He too is naïvely tranquil, living in luxury and idleness of life.

After Tolstoy's departure Tourgénéf frequently spoke kindly and affectionately of him as a man, and with enthusiasm of him as an author. One day Tourgénéf appeared with a book in his hand and read to his guests the chapter in *War and Peace* which tells how two battalions of the 6th Chasseurs marched past Bagration to battle with the French [2nd Part, vol. i., Chap. 18].

' . . . They had not yet come up to Bagration, but the heavy, weighty tread of a mass of men marching in step was already heard.'

Tourgénéf read the whole chapter to the end admirably and with enthusiasm, and when he had finished he raised

his head and said: 'I know nothing in any literature of our time superior to that description. That is how one ought to describe! . . .' and though every one agreed with him, he continued to demonstrate how highly artistic it is.

Immediately after this visit, Tolstoy went to his Samára estate. But to busy himself with the management of property was becoming intolerable to him, and his Diary gives constant indications of his disquiet. For instance he, who was so keen a horseman, jots down:

16 *July*.—I walked and rode to inspect the horses. An unendurable occupation. Idleness. Shame.

22 *July*.—The husband of the woman from Pávlovka died in hospital, and their son died of hunger. The little girl was saved by giving her milk. The shepherd at Patróvsky; poverty. Pale and grey.

A talk with A. A. about those landlords who are for holding the land, and those who are for distribution. Orlóf-Davídof's peasants: one *desyatína* a head [less than three acres]. They cannot even afford *kvas*, while he owns 49,000 *desyatínas*.

On 24th July he wrote to his wife:

Harvest prospects are excellent. What would be sad, if we could not give at least some help, is that there are so many poor in the villages; and it is a timid poverty, unaware of itself.

The Countess replied:

Let the management of the estate go on as has been arranged. I do not want anything altered. There may be losses—we have learnt to be accustomed to them; but even if there are large profits, the money will reach neither me nor the children if it is given away. At any rate you know my opinion about helping the poor: we cannot feed thousands of Samára and other poor inhabitants, but if one sees and knows that so-and-so is poor, and has no corn or horse or cow or hut, etc., one must give all that, at once, and one cannot

refrain from giving, because one feels sorry for them, and because it ought to be done.

The problem of poverty, comparatively simple in primitive communities where the way of life is fixed by custom and each inhabitant is well known to his neighbours, and which, again, in a wealthy and well-arranged community, may become manageable under some elaborately organised plan of administration, is a heart-breaking affair during a transition period such as that in which Tolstoy was living, or we ourselves are still face to face with. It is obviously too large to be dealt with by any individual's strength or means; while to shut one's eyes to it, is to blind oneself to the most urgent of social problems. In the succeeding years we shall see how it oppressed Tolstoy, what efforts he made to deal with it, and how vividly he was able to present the problem—just because he did not shrink from facing the facts.

During this stay in the Province of Samára, he saw a good deal of the Molokáns, Sabbatarians and other sectarians, who interested him very much. He also met A. S. Prougávin—'a very interesting and sedate man'—who was studying the varieties of religious beliefs among the Samára peasants. On 24th July, Tolstoy writes to his wife :

The Molokáns are most interesting. I have been to a prayer-meeting of theirs, and heard their explanation of the Gospels and took part in the discussion. They have also visited me, and asked me to explain how I understand things; and I read them extracts from my MS. The seriousness, interest, and healthy, clear sense of these half-educated people is amazing.

In another letter he writes :

Yesterday an old hermit came to see me. He lives in the forest near the Bouzoulouík road. He himself is neither very interesting nor agreeable—except that he was one of those

peasants who, forty years ago, settled on Bouzouloúk Hill and founded the immense monastery we saw there. I have taken a note of his story.

A little later, feeling how heavy a burden he had allowed to fall upon his wife, who was expecting her eighth child that autumn, he wrote :

You will be going to Moscow to-day. You would not believe how troubled I am at the thought that you may be over-taxing your strength, and how I repent of having given you little or no help.

In this respect the koumýs has done good : it has brought me down from the point of view from which, carried away by my work, I involuntarily regarded everything. I now see things differently. I still have the same thoughts and feelings, but am cured of the delusion that others can and should see everything as I do. I am much to blame towards you, darling ; unconsciously, involuntarily, as you know : but still none the less to blame.

My excuse is that in order to work with the intensity with which I worked, and to get something done, one has to forget all else. And I forgot you too much, and now repent. For heaven's sake and our love's sake, take care of yourself ! Put off as much as you can till my return ; I will gladly do everything, and will not do it amiss, for I will take pains.

In a subsequent letter he writes with approval of a family he was staying with, the members of which did most of their own housework, keeping only one servant. Speaking of these people, who were aiming at a simple life, he adds :

They are admirable people, and strive with all their might and all their energy towards the very best and justest way of living, while life and their family pull in another direction—and the result is a middle course. Looking at it from aside, I see that good as this mean is, it is yet far below what they aim at. One applies the lesson to oneself, and learns to be satisfied with a mean. One sees the same mean among the Molokáns and among the peasants, particularly here.



About this time his family were reminded of Tolstoy's former life in the Caucasus, by the arrival at Yásnaya of a Cossack—a nephew of Epíshka (Eróshka in *The Cossacks*). The man had known Tolstoy at Starogládovsk, and riding all the way from the Caucasus to ask the Emperor to give him some post or other, had turned aside to visit Tolstoy in passing.

The Countess wrote to her husband of this event; and in a letter written just before his return, we find her reproaching him for staying too long in Samára. She was, however, delighted to hear that he was thinking of writing a story :

What a joyful feeling seized me when I read that you again wished to write something poetic !

You have felt what I have long waited and longed for. In that, lies salvation and joy; that will again unite us, and will console you, and will light up your life. That is real work, for which you were created, and outside that sphere there is no peace for your soul. I know that you cannot force yourself, but God grant you may cherish that gleam, and that that divine spark in you may again kindle and spread. The thought enchants me.

On his way home Tolstoy notes in his Diary :

1 *August*.—At Ryazhk every month a man is killed on the railway. To the devil with all machines, if a man [must be sacrificed] !

He reached home just when there were many visitors and great preparations for amateur theatricals. This jarred on him after the primitive simplicity he had enjoyed in Samára, and he noted in his Diary :

18 *August*.—A Play. Empty people. The days, 19, 20 and 21 must be struck out of my life.

On the 22nd, Tourgénéf visited Yásnaya. The Countess writes of his stay :

In the evening my children and nieces got up a quadrille. The children's merriment infected Tourgénéf. He danced in the quadrille with my niece, and then took off his coat and, sticking his thumbs into his waistcoat, to the children's great delight, began to perform strange figures with his legs, saying, 'That's how they dance the *cancan* in Paris.'

He was very merry that evening, praising everything and everybody. Looking at me kindly, he said to Leo Nikoláye-vitch, 'How well you did, my dear, to choose such a wife!'

Tolstoy felt differently about Tourgénéf's behaviour, and noted laconically in his Diary:

Tourgénéf, *cancan*: it is sad. Meeting peasants on the road was joyful.

On 1st September he notes:

I often wish to die. My work does not absorb me.

His eldest son, Sergius, was now eighteen, and about to enter the University. Educational opportunities were also needed for the other children, with whose tuition Tolstoy, owing to his religious preoccupations, had almost ceased to concern himself. Moreover, the eldest daughter, Tánya, was seventeen. In the ordinary course of events it was time for her to be brought out into Society; and it had been decided long before that it would be necessary for the family to move to Moscow that winter. In mid-September 1881 they did so, and settled in a hired house.

Greatly as Tolstoy now disliked the idea, he had to consent to it; nor till he was in Moscow did he fully realise how painful town life would be to him after so many years spent in the country.

On 5th October he noted in his Diary:

A month has passed. The most tormenting in my life. The move to Moscow. All are busy arranging; when will they begin to live? All of it, not for the sake of living, but to be like other people. Unfortunates! Life is lacking.

Smells, stones, luxury, destitution and vice. Malefactors have come together, robbed the people, collected soldiers and set up Law Courts to protect their orgies, and they feast. The people can do nothing, but, by taking advantage of the passions of these others, lure back from them what has been stolen. The men-peasants are cleverest at that. Their wives remain in the villages while they wax our parquet floors and rub our bodies in the baths, and ply as cabmen.

On 14th October the Countess wrote to her sister :

To-morrow we shall have been here a month, and I have not written a word to any one. For the first fortnight I cried every day, because Lyóvotchka not only became depressed, but even fell into a kind of desperate apathy. He did not sleep and did not eat, and sometimes literally wept; and I really thought I should go mad. You would be surprised to see how I have altered and how thin I have grown. Afterwards he went to the Province of Tver and visited his old acquaintances the Bakoúnins (a Liberal-artistic-Zémstvo-literary house), and then went to a village to see some sectarian Christian, and when he returned he was less in the dumps. Now he has arranged to work in the wing, where he has hired himself two small, quiet rooms for Rs. 6 a month. Then he goes across the Maidens' Field and over the river to the Sparrow Hills, and there he saws and splits wood with some peasants. It is good for his health and cheers him up.

The sectarian Christian referred to was Soutáef, a very remarkable peasant, whose thoughts and feelings were strikingly in accord with Tolstoy's. The fact that Tolstoy left home to find Soutáef on the evening of the very day he first heard from Prougávin of his existence, indicates the strength of the craving he felt at this time for spiritual fellowship.

Soutáef and his sons had abandoned their occupation as tombstone-makers in Petersburg, because they considered competitive business immoral. In accord with the Gospel

injunction, they forgave their debtors: that is to say, did not collect the money due from their customers. Soutáef retired to the country and undertook the duties of village herdsman, and made it his aim to treat the beasts better than they had been treated before; using, for instance, no whip when he drove a horse. His sons, on conscientious grounds, refused to serve in the army, and suffered imprisonment for so doing. His whole family rejected the Church, disapproved of the State, and organised a Commune among themselves. When asked how, if people wanted to marry, they could get on without a priest, Soutáef told of his daughter's marriage:

When the matter was decided and we met in the evening, I spoke to them about how people ought to live; then we made their bed, put them to sleep together, put out the light, and that was the whole wedding.

Tolstoy was charmed by Soutáef. The simplicity, seriousness, and conscientiousness of this type of peasant, their fearlessness in facing the great problems of human conduct, their scorn of conventional shams, their industry, tenacity, and endurance, the usefulness and frugality of their lives, as well as their concise and pithy way of expressing their thoughts, evoked his enthusiastic admiration; and no amount of disappointment at the practical results of their efforts ever seemed to diminish that admiration.

At the conclusion of Tolstoy's visit to Soutáef, the latter harnessed a horse to drive his guest to the Bakoúnins. On the way the two men became so absorbed in discussing the imminence of the Kingdom of God, that they did not notice what the horse was doing, and their cart upset into a ravine! Fortunately neither of them was seriously hurt by the accident.

The influence Soutáef had on Tolstoy depended not so much on what he said, as on the fact that he had altered

his life in accordance with his perception of what was right: which was just what Tolstoy himself was finding it extremely difficult to do. The latter's distress of mind, perplexity, striving, and sufferings, as well as the firmness of his conviction that he was at last treading the path to peace, can perhaps best be shown by quoting from letters he wrote at this time. Here is one addressed to V. I. Alexéyef:

Thanks for your good letter, dear V. I.! We, as it were, forget that we love each other. I do not wish to forget it—or that I am much indebted to you for the tranquillity and clearness of outlook on life I have attained to. You were the first man (touched by education) whom I knew, who not in words but in spirit confessed the faith that has become for me a clear and steadfast light. That made me believe in the possibility of what had always dimly stirred in my soul. And therefore as you have been, so you will always remain, dear to me. The lack of clearness and continuity in your life disconcerts me, as does your last letter—full of worldly cares; but I myself was so recently full of them, and am still so weak in my own life, that I ought to realise how complex is the interweaving of one's life with one's past temptations, and that the essential lies not in external forms, but in one's faith. And I am glad to think that you and I have the same faith.

Of my project of collecting my debts, and founding something for the service of man with the money, I must admit that it was all nonsense and worse than nonsense: it was evil vanity. The one thing extenuating and explaining my fault, is that I was doing it for my family. From money, of course (as you write) hardly anything but evil can come; but for my family it would be the beginning of that towards which I continually strive—the giving away of what one has, not to do good, but to be less to blame.

I know very well that my arguments were not very convincing. But rightly or wrongly, I believe that I can make them irrefutable to any logical and reasonable man. But I have

become convinced that to convince by logic is not necessary. I have passed through that stage. What I have written and said is sufficient to indicate the path; every seeker will find it for himself, and will find better and fuller arguments, more suitable to himself; but the thing is to indicate the path. Now I have become convinced that only one's life can show the path: only the example of one's life. The effect of that example is very slow, very indefinite (in the sense that, I think, one cannot possibly know whom it will influence) and very difficult. But it alone gives a real impulse. Example is the proof of the possibility of Christian—that is of reasonable and happy—life under all possible conditions. That alone moves people; and that alone is necessary both to me and to you—so let us help one another to give it. Write to me, and let us be as truthful as possible with one another.

Later on, V. I. Alexéyef married a fine lady, became Principal of a School, and abandoned his Simple Life tendencies; but he had helped Tolstoy to realise that life is full of things that destroy and spoil happiness, and the continuance of which depends on us. Tolstoy's own experience showed him that the attempt to change life's conditions is the most interesting of occupations, and that a reformer who plays his part manfully, using his powers for the highest aims he sees, though he end by being burnt at the stake, may yet have enjoyed life more abundantly than his fellows who tread conventional paths. His grasp of this truth makes Tolstoy powerful and attractive; but it was very difficult for him—a landed proprietor with strong family ties, an artistic temperament and deeply rooted prejudices—to emancipate himself; and his strenuous efforts caused him at times to lose balance, and to attribute paramount importance to questionable opinions.

Among the few congenial spirits he met at this time were Nicholas Fyódorovitch Fyódorof, Librarian to the Roumyántsef Museum in Moscow (where the admirable

tradition he founded still lives, if I may judge by the kindly help rendered me by the Assistant-Librarian N. M. Sómof when I worked there), and Orlóf, a teacher in a school for the children of the employees on one of the railways. Of these men Tolstoy speaks in another letter to V. I. Alexéyef:

Thank you, dear Vasily Ivánovitch, for your letter. I think of you constantly and love you very much. You are dissatisfied with yourself; what then must I say of myself? It is very hard for me in Moscow. I have been here more than two months, and it is still just as hard. I now see that though I knew of the mass of temptations amid which people live, I did not believe in them and could not realise them—just as one learnt from Geography that there is a Caucasus, but only really knew it when one got there. And the mass of that evil oppresses me, brings me to despair, inspires distrust, and makes me amazed that no one sees it. Perhaps to find an honest path in life for myself, I needed this experience. It seems at first as though one must choose one of two things: either let one's hands drop, and suffer passively, yielding to despair, or make peace with evil, befogging oneself with cards and chatter and bustle. But fortunately I cannot do the latter, and the former is too painful, so I seek an outlet. The outlet that presents itself to me is preaching, in print and *viva voce*. But here stand vanity, pride, and possibly self-deception—and one dreads them. Another issue is to assist people, but there the immensity of the number of unfortunates crushes one. It is not here as in a village, where a natural group has been formed. The only issue I see is to live well, always turning one's kindly side to every one; but I have not yet learnt to do that as you do it. When I break down, I remember you. I seldom manage to be like that: I am fiery, get angry and indignant and feel dissatisfied with myself. But there are some real people even here; and God has let me meet two such: Orlóf is one, and the other and chief is Nicholas Fyódorovitch Fyódorof. . . . Do you remember my telling you of him? . . . When I speak to him of carrying out the Christian teaching, he says: 'Yes, *that* of course,' and I know he does

perform it. He is sixty; poor, gives away everything, and is always bright and gentle. Orlóf is a man who has suffered [politically]: he was two years in prison over Netcháyef's affair, and is sickly. He also is ascetic in his life, provides for nine people, and lives rightly. He is a teacher in a railway school. Orlóf and Fyódorof have read my book, *The Gospel in Brief*, and we are in full agreement with Soutáef to the smallest details. So it should be well. I am also writing stories, in which I wish to express my ideas. Again that should be well, yet I lack tranquillity. I am oppressed by the triumph of indifference and conventionality, and the customariness of evil and deception. I have been at home all the time; in the mornings I try to work, but it goes badly. At 2 or 3 o'clock I go across the Moskvá River to saw up timber. And when I have the strength and wish to do it, it refreshes me, strengthens me, and I see something of real life, into which—if but for a moment—I dive and am refreshed. But when I don't go (some three weeks ago I relaxed and ceased to go, and quite went down in the dumps), then irritability and spleen overcome me. In the evenings I sit at home and am possessed by visitors and conversations, which though interesting are empty. I now want to shut myself off from them. I have re-read this letter and see it is terribly stupid, but fear I cannot write a better one, and so I send it off. I will be sure to write better next time. Please write oftener.

There is something very sad in the further story of Tolstoy's relations with Fyódorof. Their friendship lasted some years and was then broken off owing to the fact that Tolstoy could not accept certain views Fyódorof deemed vitally important. This led the latter in his writings to refer to Tolstoy with virulence; but Tolstoy, who greatly admired the asceticism of Fyódorof's life and was fully convinced of his sincerity, never spoke of him otherwise than with high respect, and never showed any signs of the contemptuous irritability he often displayed when dealing with men of higher rank and world-wide reputation.



Unity of views was extremely difficult to obtain among men who were shaping life anew, and unity of action was still further from their reach. At the end of November we learn by a letter of Stráhof's that Tolstoy had reproached him with understanding his feelings but not sharing them. Stráhof replied that that reproach 'puts me to shame, and continually troubles my conscience'; but he frankly adds:

I lack the strength of feeling you possess, and do not wish to force myself or to pretend. Where can I obtain devotion and ardour such as you feel? . . . Be indulgent to me, and do not reject me because of this difference. I know your aversion to the world, for I share the feeling, but I feel it in a slight degree which neither stifles nor torments me, though I have no attachment to the world, or if I have any, I now try to destroy it and to sever the last threads. . . . Do not be stringently exacting with me. To you I owe, probably, the best moments of my life. Do not look only at what is bad in me, but also at what can be found of good. Correct me, however; I hearken to you willingly, as you know.

Thanks to Stráhof's frank and conciliatory attitude, good relations were maintained.

On 31st October of this year, 1881, another son was born to Tolstoy, and was christened Alexéy.

It may not be out of place to close this chapter by quoting the novelist Boborýkin's account of Tolstoy's appearance the day he first visited him, at about the time we have now reached:

Tolstoy had then the appearance of a kindly, middle-aged man, not yet perceptibly grey; a person not yet quite rusticised, but already noticeably unwilling to submit to fashion, or even to the proprieties obligatory on the master of a hospitable, aristocratic house. He wore no waistcoat, but only a pea-jacket over his shirt; and as it became hot in the room, he took off his coat. Just then the Countess entered the room to ask whether we would have tea.

She jokingly made a remark to her husband about his attire, to which without resuming his coat he good-naturedly replied that it was too hot in the room. This seemed to put the Countess somewhat out of countenance.

I then saw her for the first and last time. She was a very fine woman, with a handsome face, a light step, and a pleasant voice, and was elegantly dressed.

### CHIEF AUTHORITIES FOR CHAPTER III

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## CHAPTER IV

### RICHES AND POVERTY

[1882] The Moscow Census. Tolstoy's Appeal. *What Then Must We Do?* Moscow beggars. Hitrof Market. Lyápinsky House. Our crime. 'We cannot live so!' Luxurious life, a torment. Utilising the Census for the relief of destitution. Rzhánof House: Inhabitants. Destitute gentry. Loose women. Children. Crowds. The last round. Rzhánof House by night. Applicants and donors. The rag-and-bone man. Distributing Rs.37. What did it mean? Soutáef's remedy. Sarah Bernhardt. Tolstoy and the Poor Law Commission. The service he has rendered.

WE have seen how Tolstoy strove to grasp the meaning and purpose of man's life, and to realise the relation of the Finite to the Infinite. This phase of his development culminated with the completion of his studies of theology and the Gospels, and the writing of *What do I Believe?* The next great problem that he tackled was the economic question: Why are the many poor?

He was sure that it is man's business to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. He was convinced, too, that by conforming to the laws of God, miserable lives can be made happy. In Moscow he was horrified to see how wretchedly a large part of the population live; and how callous the religious, learned, wealthy and governing classes are to the fate of their less fortunate brethren.

With characteristic impetuosity, self-reliance, energy, and ignorance of the nature of the case he had begun to deal with, he seized the occasion presented by the ap-

proaching decennial Census on 23rd, 24th, and 25th January 1882, to issue an ardent appeal to society in general. The 2000 students and others about to engage in conducting the Census should, he said, take that opportunity to become acquainted with the destitute in Moscow, to whom organised relief should be extended. *What Then Must We Do?*—in some respects the most soul-stirring book Tolstoy ever wrote—grew out of this appeal and out of the experience that followed it. 1882.

He subsequently poured such scorn on his newspaper article, *On the Census in Moscow*, that I will pass it over lightly, but not without quoting a couple of its most characteristic sentences.

The first of these shows the Franciscan attitude Tolstoy adopted towards money, an attitude which subsequently often caused him and his followers much perplexity. He says that :

‘To do good,’ is generally understood to mean, ‘to give money.’ But in my opinion, ‘to do good’ and ‘to give money’ are not only not one and the same thing, but are two things quite different, and for the most part opposite. Money in itself is an evil. And therefore he who gives money, does evil. The delusion that to give money is to do good, has arisen because, for the most part, when a man does good he also frees himself from evil, including money. . . .

That he was, however, not very clear on this point is indicated by another sentence, in which he explains the relation he wished to see established between the helpers and the helped :

It may be the smallest part of the matter that we, the Census clerks and organisers, may distribute a hundred sixpenny-bits to people who are hungry ; yet that will not be a small thing, not so much because the hungry will be fed, as because clerks and organisers will have dealt with a hundred poor people as with human beings. . . .

There is an obvious contradiction in first saying that 'he who gives money does evil,' and then approving of the distribution of a hundred sixpenny pieces; but Tolstoy himself would explain, as he has often done, that though no good may come of one's gift, one has still no right to refuse to give of one's superfluity to him that is in need.

His argument on that point may not seem convincing; but in the next passage, together with his amazing optimism, one sees his talent for getting with sublime simplicity to the root of a great matter:

. . . However little may be accomplished, it will be of importance. But why not hope that everything will be accomplished? Why not hope that we shall bring it about that there will not, in Moscow, be one person unclothed, hungry, or selling himself for money, not one unfortunate crushed by Fate, who does not know where to find brotherly aid? What is wonderful is, not that this has not yet been done, but *that these things exist side by side with our superfluity of leisure and wealth, and that we can live quietly, knowing of them!*

His practical proposals were ludicrously inadequate to meet the evil, but the words I have italicised strike a note which will be heard long after all the blunders of all the reformers of our time, and all the clamour raised by their opponents, have been forgotten.

*What Then Must We Do?* was not finished till February 1886; but I must quote from it here, for it tells of what happened in January 1882. It is a book which besides explaining Tolstoy's view of the social problem, is autobiographically of very great value; yet it is, I think, little known to English readers, partly no doubt because of the inadequacy of the existing versions. I have therefore retranslated all the passages I quote. I must also mention that the book contains much interesting matter that I have not room to reproduce.

As an epigraph, Tolstoy quotes Luke iii. vs. 10, 11.

And the multitudes asked him, saying, *What then must we do?* And he answered and said unto them, 'He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise. . . .'

The book is divided into forty short chapters, of which, in the following pages, I quote chiefly the autobiographical matter from the first twelve.

# I

I had spent my life in the country, and when in 1881 I came to live in Moscow, the sight of town poverty surprised me.

I knew country poverty, but town poverty was new and incomprehensible to me. In Moscow one cannot pass a street without meeting beggars, and beggars who are not like the country ones. They do not 'carry a bag and beg in Christ's name,' as country beggars say of themselves; they go without a bag and do not beg. When you meet or pass them they generally only try to catch your eye; and according to your look, they either ask or do not ask. I know one such beggar from among the gentry. The old man walks slowly, stooping at each step. When he meets you, he stoops on one leg and seems to be making you a bow. If you stop, he takes off his cockaded cap, bows again, and begs; but if you do not stop, he makes as though this were merely his way of walking, and goes on, stooping in the same way, first on one leg and then on the other.

He is a typical, educated, Moscow beggar.

At first I did not know why they do not ask plainly. Afterwards I learnt this, but still did not understand their position.

It turned out that in Moscow, by law, all the beggars (of whom one meets several in every street, and rows of whom stand outside every church when service is on, and

who regularly attend every funeral) are forbidden to beg.

But why some are caught and shut up and others not, I was unable to discover. Either there are legal and illegal beggars, or there are so many that they cannot all be caught; or as quickly as some are captured, others spring up.

There are in Moscow beggars of all sorts. There are some who live by it; and there are genuine beggars who have come to Moscow for some reason or other and are really destitute.

Among these latter there are many simple peasants, both men and women, wearing peasant clothes. I often meet them. Some of them have fallen ill here, and have been let out of hospital, and can neither support themselves nor get away from Moscow. Some are not ill, but have lost their all in a fire, or are old, or are women with children; while some are quite healthy and able to work. These healthy peasants, asking alms, interested me particularly; for since I came to Moscow I had, for the sake of exercise, formed the habit of going to work at the Sparrow Hills with two peasants who sawed wood there.

These two men were just like those I met in the streets. One was Peter, a soldier from Kaloúga; the other was Simon, a peasant from Vladímir. They owned nothing except the clothes on their backs, and their own hands. With those hands they earned 40 to 45 copecks (10d. to 11d.) a day, of which they both put something by: Peter, to buy a sheepskin coat; and Simon, for the journey back to his village. So I was particularly interested to meet just such men on the streets.

Why do these work and those beg?

On meeting such a peasant I generally asked how he came to be in such a state. I once met a healthy peasant whose beard was beginning to go grey. He begged. I asked who he was. He said he had come from Kaloúga

to find work. At first he had found some work—cutting up old timber for firewood. He and his mate cut up all the wood at one place. Then he looked for another job, but found none. His mate left him, and now he had been knocking about for a fortnight, having eaten all he possessed, and he had nothing with which to buy either a saw or a chopper. I gave him money for a saw, and told him where he could come and work. (I had arranged beforehand with Peter and Simon to take on another man and to find him a mate.)

‘Well then, be sure and come. There is plenty of work there,’ said I.

‘I’ll come—why not? Does one like to go begging?’ said he. ‘I can work.’

He swore he would come, and it seemed to me he was in earnest and meant to.

Next day I joined my acquaintances the peasants, and asked if the man had turned up. He had not. And several others cheated me in the same way. I was also cheated by men who said they only needed money to buy a railway ticket home, but whom I met on the street again a week later. Many such I recognised, and they recognised me; but sometimes, having forgotten me, they told me the same story again. Some of them turned away on seeing me. So I learned that among this class, too, there are many cheats; but I was very sorry for these cheats: they were a half-clad, poor, thin, sickly folk: the kind of people who really freeze to death or hang themselves, as we learn from the papers.

## II

When I spoke to Moscovites of this destitution in the city I was always told, ‘Oh, what you have seen is nothing! Go to Hítrof Market, and see the doss-houses there. That’s where you’ll see the real “Golden Company”!’



One joker told me it was no longer a 'Company,' but had become a 'Golden Regiment'—there are now so many of them. The joker was right; but he would have been still more so had he said that in Moscow these people are now neither a company nor a regiment, but a whole army, numbering, I suppose, about 50,000. Old inhabitants, when telling me of town poverty, always spoke of it with a kind of pleasure—as if proud of knowing about it. I remember also that when I was in London, people there spoke boastfully of London pauperism: 'Just look what it is like here!'

I wanted to see this destitution, about which I had been told; and several times I set out towards Hítrof Market, but each time I felt uncomfortable and ashamed. 'Why go to look on at the sufferings of people I cannot help?' said one voice within me: 'If you live here and see all the allurements of town-life, go and see that also,' said another voice; and so, one frosty, windy day in December 1881, I went to the heart of the town destitution—Hítrof Market. It was a week-day, towards four o'clock. In Solyánka Street I already noticed more and more people wearing strange clothes not made for them, and in yet stranger foot-gear; people with a peculiar, unhealthy complexion, and especially with an air common to them all, an air of indifference to everything around them. A man went along quite at his ease, dressed in most strange, impossible clothes, evidently quite regardless of what he looked like to others. All these people were going in one direction. Without asking the way (which I did not know) I went with them, and came to Hítrof Market. There were women of the same type, in all sorts of capes, cloaks, jackets, boots and goloshes, equally at ease in spite of the hideousness of their garb; old and young, they sat trading in goods of some sort, walking about, scolding and swearing. There were few people in the market. It was evidently over, and most of the people were ascending

the hill, going through and past the market, all in one direction. I followed them, and the further I went the more people there seemed to be, all going one way. Passing the market and going up the street, I overtook two women : one old, the other young. Both wore tattered, drab clothes. They went along talking about some affair. After each necessary word, one or two unnecessary and most improper words were uttered. Neither of them was drunk ; they were occupied about something, and the men who met them, and those who were behind and in front of them, paid no attention to their manner of speech, which to me sounded so strange. It was evident that, here, people always talked like that.

To the left were private dosshouses, and some turned into them, while others went further. Ascending the hill, we came to a large corner house. Most of those among whom I had been walking, stopped there. All along the pavement and on the snow in the street, people of the same type stood and sat. To the right of the entrance door were the women, to the left the men. I passed both the women and the men (there were some hundreds), and stopped where the line ended. The house outside which they were waiting was the Lyápinsky Free Night-Lodging-House. The crowd were lodgers awaiting admission. At 5 P.M. the doors open, and people are let in. Nearly all those I had overtaken were on their way here

When I stopped, where the line of men ended, those nearest began to look at me, and drew me to them by their glances. The tatters covering their bodies were very various, but the expression in all the eyes directed towards me was the same. They all seemed to say : 'Why have you, a man from a different world, stopped near us ? Who are you ? A self-satisfied rich man, who wishes to enjoy our misery, to kill time, and to torture us—or are you, that which does not and cannot exist,—a man who pities us ?' This question was on every face. They

looked, caught my eye, and turned away. I wanted to speak to some one of them, but could long not make up my mind to do so. Yet, widely as life had divided us, after our glances had met twice or thrice, we felt that we were akin, and we ceased to fear one another. Nearest to me stood a fellow with a swollen face and a red beard, in a torn coat and with worn-out goloshes on his bare feet. There were eight degrees Réaumur of frost [= fourteen degrees Fahrenheit]. I met his glance three or four times, and felt so near to him that instead of being ashamed to speak to him, I should have been ashamed not to say something. So I asked where he came from? He answered readily and began talking, while others drew near. He was from Smolénsk, and had come to seek work, hoping to be able to buy corn and pay his taxes. 'There is no work to be got,' said he. 'The soldiers [who in Russia are often hired out to work at cheap rates] have taken all the work. So I am knocking about, and God knows I have not eaten for two days!' He spoke timidly, with an attempted smile. A seller of hot drinks [*sbítén*, made of honey and spices] was standing near, and I called him. He poured out a glass. The peasant took it in his hands, and trying not to lose any of the heat, warmed them with it before drinking. While doing so, he told me his adventures (the adventures, or the stories of them told by these men, were almost all alike). He had had a little work, but it came to an end; and then his purse, with his passport and what money he had, had been stolen, here in the Night-Lodging-House. Now he could not get away from Moscow. He said that during the day he warmed himself in the drink-shops, and ate scraps of bread, which were sometimes given to him; but sometimes they drove him out. He got his night's lodging free in Lyápinsky House. He was now only waiting for the police to put him in prison for having no passport, and to send him by *étape* [on foot, with others, under escort] to his native place.

'They say there will be a police-search on Thursday,' added he. Prison and the *étape* were to him like the Promised Land.

While he was telling me this, two or three others from among the crowd confirmed his words and said they were in the same plight. A lean youth, pale, long-nosed, with nothing over his shirt (which was torn at the shoulder) and with a peakless cap, pushed his way sidelong to me, through the crowd. He was shivering violently all the time, but tried to smile contemptuously at the peasant's speech, thinking thereby to adapt himself to my tone, and he looked me in the face. I offered him, too, some *sbiten*. On taking the glass he also warmed both hands on it, but he had only begun to speak when he was shoved aside by a big, black, Roman-nosed fellow in a print shirt and a waistcoat, but no cap. The Roman-nosed man asked for some *sbiten*. Then followed a tall, drunken old man with a pointed beard, in an overcoat tied round the waist with a cord, and wearing bast-shoes. Then came a small fellow with a swollen face and watery eyes, in a brown nankeen pea-jacket, with bare knees showing through the holes in his summer trousers and knocking together from cold. He shivered so that he could not hold the glass, but spilled it over himself. The others began to abuse him, but he only smiled pitifully and shivered. Then came a crooked, deformed man in tatters, and with strips of linen tied round his bare feet; then something that looked like an officer, then something that looked like a cleric, then something strange and noseless: all, hungry, cold, importunate and submissive, crowded round me and pressed near the *sbiten* till it was all finished. One man asked for money, and I gave him some. Another asked, and a third, and then the crowd besieged me. Disorder and a crush ensued. A porter from the next house shouted to them to get off the pavement in front of his house, and they submissively obeyed his command. Organisers appeared

among the crowd, who took me under their protection. They wished to extricate me from the crush; but the crowd, that had at first stretched along the pavement, had now gathered round me. They all looked at me and begged; and each face was more pitiful, more jaded, and more degraded than the last. I gave away all I had with me, which was not much, only some Rs. 20 [£2]; and, following the crowd, I entered the Night-Lodging-House. It was an immense building, consisting of four departments. On the top stories were the men's lodgings; and on the lower stories the women's. First I entered the latter: a large room, all filled with bunks, arranged in two tiers, above and below. Women old and young—strange, tattered, with no outdoor garments—entered and took possession of their bunks: some below and some above. Some of the older ones crossed themselves and prayed for the founder of this refuge. Others laughed and swore.

I went upstairs to the men's lodging. Among them I saw a man to whom I had given money. On seeing him, I suddenly felt dreadfully ashamed, and hurried away. And feeling as if I had committed a crime, I left the house and went home. There I entered. Ascending the carpeted steps to the cloth-carpeted hall, and taking off my fur-coat, I sat down to a five-course dinner, served by two lackeys in dress clothes with white ties and white gloves.

Thirty years ago in Paris, I once saw how, in the presence of thousands of spectators, they cut a man's head off with a guillotine. I knew he was a dreadful criminal; I knew all the arguments that have been written in defence of that kind of action, and I knew it was done deliberately and intentionally; but at the moment the head and body separated and fell into the box, I gasped and realised not with my mind but with my heart and my whole being, that all the arguments in defence of capital punishment are wicked nonsense, and that however many people may combine to commit murder—the worst of all crimes—and

whatever they may call themselves, murder remains murder, and that a crime had been committed before my eyes; and I, by my presence and non-intervention, had approved and shared in it.

In the same way now, at the sight of the hunger, cold, and degradation of thousands of people, I understood not only with my mind or heart but with my whole being, that the existence of tens of thousands of such people in Moscow—while I and thousands of others over-eat ourselves with beef-steaks and sturgeon, and cover our horses and floors with cloth or carpets—no matter what all the learned men in the world may say about its necessity, is a crime, and one not committed once, but constantly; and that I with my luxury not merely tolerate it, but share in it.

For me the difference between these two impressions was, that there, all I could have done would have been to cry out to the murderers who stood around the guillotine arranging the murder—that they were doing wrong, and to have tried by all means to hinder it. Even then, I should have known in advance that my action would not prevent the murder. But here, I could have given not *sbiten* alone and the trifling sum of money I had with me, but the overcoat I wore, and all I had at home. But I had not done it, and I therefore felt and feel, and shall not cease to feel, that as long as I have any superfluous food and some one else has none, and I have two coats and some one else has none, I share in a constantly repeated crime.

### III

The evening that I returned from Lyápinsky House, I told my impressions to a friend. He, a town dweller, began to explain with some satisfaction that it was the most natural thing in a city; and that it was merely my provincialism that caused me to see anything particular in

it. Things had always been so, and would and must always be so; it is an inevitable condition of civilisation. In London it is still worse . . . so there is nothing bad in it, and one must not be dissatisfied with it.

I began to answer my friend; but did it so warmly and irritably that my wife hurried in from an adjoining room to see what had happened. It seems that, without knowing what I was doing, I had cried out with tears in my voice, and waved my arms at my friend, exclaiming: 'One cannot live so; one cannot; one cannot!'

They put me to shame for my unseemly ardour, and told me that I cannot talk quietly about anything, but always get unpleasantly excited. In particular, they proved to me that the existence of such unfortunate people does not justify my spoiling the lives of those about me.

I felt that this was quite just, and I was silenced; but at the bottom of my heart I felt that I, too, was right; and I could not feel at ease.

Town life, which had seemed strange and foreign to me before, now became so repulsive that all the pleasures of the luxurious life I formerly enjoyed became a torment to me. And in spite of all efforts to find in my soul a justification for our way of living, I could not without irritation behold either my own or any other drawing-room, nor any clean, elegantly laid table, nor a carriage with well-fed coachman and horses, nor the shops, theatres and assemblies. I could not help seeing beside them, the hungry, cold, down-trodden people in Lyápinsky House. I could not escape the thought that these two things were somehow connected, and the one resulted from the other. I remember that the consciousness of guilt which I experienced from the first moment, remained with me; though another feeling was soon added to it, obscuring it.

When I spoke of my impressions of Lyápinsky House to intimate friends and acquaintances, they all replied, as the first one (at whom I shouted) had done; but they also

expressed approval of my kind-heartedness and susceptibility, and gave me to understand that the sight had acted so strongly on me, merely because I—Leo Tolstoy—am a very kind and good man. I willingly believed them; and before I had time to look round, there came to me—together with the first feeling of shame and repentance—a feeling of satisfaction at my own virtue, and a desire to exhibit it. ‘Really,’ said I to myself, ‘the fault probably lies not in my luxury, but in the inevitable conditions of life. An alteration in my life cannot cure the evils I have seen. By altering my life, I shall only make myself and those near me unhappy, while the destitute will remain as badly off as ever. Therefore the task for me is not to change my own life, as I thought at first, but as far as I can to aid in improving the position of those unfortunates who have evoked my sympathy. The fact of the matter is, that I am a very good, kind man, and wish to benefit my neighbours.’

So I began to devise a plan of philanthropic activity by which I could exhibit my goodness. I should remark, however, that when devising this philanthropic activity, I felt all the time in the depth of my soul that it was wrong. But, as often happens, reasoning and imagination stifled the voice of conscience.

It happened that preparations were being made at that time for the Census. This seemed a good opportunity for starting the charity in which I wished to exhibit my goodness. I knew of many philanthropic organisations in Moscow, but their activities seemed falsely directed and insignificant in comparison with what I aimed at. So I planned the following: to arouse sympathy for town poverty among the rich; to collect money, enrol people willing to help in the affair, and with the Census-takers to visit all the dens of destitution and, besides compiling the Census, to enter into relations with the unfortunates and investigate their needs, helping them with money and



work, or by getting them back to their villages, as well as by putting their children to school and the old folk into refuges and almshouses. More than that, I thought that from among those engaged in this work, a permanent society could be formed, which, dividing the districts of Moscow among its members, would see that poverty and destitution should not be allowed to breed, but would constantly nip it in the bud, and perform the duty not so much of curing town poverty, as of preventing it. I already imagined that, not to speak of the totally destitute, there would be none left in want in the town, and that I should have accomplished all this; and that we, the rich, could afterwards sit at ease in our drawing-rooms, eating five-course dinners, and driving in carriages to theatres and assemblies, untroubled by such sights as I had witnessed at Lyápinsky House.

Having formed this plan, I wrote an article about it [the one referred to at the beginning of this chapter]; and before sending it for publication I went about among my acquaintances, from whom I hoped to receive help. To all whom I saw that day (I specially addressed myself to the rich) I said the same thing: almost exactly what I had said in the article. I proposed to take advantage of the Census to become acquainted with the Moscow destitute, and to come to their aid with work and money, and to take such action as would abolish destitution in Moscow; and then we, the rich, could with quiet consciences enjoy the good things to which we are accustomed. They all listened attentively and seriously, but with all of them without exception the same thing occurred. As soon as they understood what it was about, they became ill-at-ease and rather shame-faced. It was as though they were ashamed chiefly on my account—that I should talk such nonsense. It was as though some external cause obliged them to be indulgent to this nonsense of mine.

‘Ah! yes, of course! It would be very good,’ said

they. 'Of course one can't help sympathising with it. Yes, your idea is excellent. I had a similar idea myself, but . . . people are so indifferent that one mustn't expect much success. . . . For my part, however, I shall of course be ready to help.'

They all said something like that. They all agreed; but, as it seemed to me, not because they were convinced, nor from any wish of their own, but from some external cause which prevented their not agreeing. I noticed also, that of all those who promised money, not one fixed the sum he or she intended to give; so that I had to fix it by asking, 'Then may I count on you for 300 or 200 or 100 or 25 roubles?' and not one of them handed me the money. When people give money for what they want, they generally give it promptly. For a box at the theatre to see Sarah Bernhardt, they hand over the money at once, to clinch the matter. But here they only tacitly consented to the sum I named. At the last house I went to that day, in the evening, I found a large gathering. The hostess has for some years been engaged in philanthropy. Several carriages stood at the entrance, and several footmen in expensive liveries were sitting in the hall. In the large drawing-room, round two tables on which stood lamps, sat married and unmarried ladies in expensive clothes with expensive ornaments, dressing little dolls. Several young men were there also, near the ladies. The dolls these ladies were making were to be disposed of at a lottery, for the poor.

The sight of this drawing-room, and of the people collected in it, impressed me very unpleasantly. Not to mention that the property of the people there assembled amounted to some millions of roubles, or that the interest on the cost of the dresses, lace, jewelry, carriages, horses, liveries, and footmen I saw there, would a hundred times exceed the value of their work,—the cost of this one gathering alone: the gloves, clean linen, and conveyances,

with the candles, tea, sugar, and biscuits provided, must have a hundred times exceeded the value of the things produced. I saw this, and could therefore understand that here, at any rate, I should find no sympathy for my plan. But I had come to make the proposal, and, difficult as I felt it, I said my say.

Of those present, one lady said she was too sensitive to go among the poor herself, but she would give money. How much, and when she would send it, she did not mention. Another lady with a young man offered their services to go among the poor—but I did not avail myself of it. The chief person to whom I addressed myself, told me it would not be possible to do much, for lack of means. Means would be lacking because the rich in Moscow were all well known, and what could be got out of them had already been got. All the philanthropists had already received rank, medals, and other honours; and for a monetary success, it would be essential to secure a fresh grant of honours from the Government, and this—the only thing that is really effective—is very difficult to obtain.

After returning home I lay down to sleep, not merely with a foreboding that my plan would come to nothing, but with a sense of shame and a consciousness that I had been doing something very nasty and shameful all day. But I did not abandon the attempt. In the first place—it had been started, and false shame kept me to it; secondly, the mere fact of being occupied with it, enabled me to continue to live in the conditions habitual to me, while its failure would oblige me to abandon these and seek new ways of life—a thing I unconsciously dreaded. So I did not trust my inward voice, but continued what I had begun.

Having given my article to be printed, I read it in proof at the Town Douma. While reading it, I felt so uncomfortable that I hesitated and blushed to tears. I noticed that everybody present was also uncomfortable.

On my asking, at the end of the reading, whether the Census Organisers accepted my proposal that they should remain at their posts to act as intermediaries between society and the necessitous poor, an awkward silence ensued. Then two members made speeches. These, as it were, corrected the awkwardness of my proposal. Sympathy was expressed with my idea, but the impracticability of my thought (of which every one approved) was pointed out. After that, all felt more at ease. But when subsequently, still wishing to carry my point, I asked the organisers separately whether they agreed to investigate the needs of the poor during the Census, and to remain at their posts to serve as intermediaries between the poor and the rich, they all again appeared uncomfortable. Their looks seemed to say, 'There now, out of respect for you, we have smoothed over your folly; but you are again obtruding it!' That was what their looks said. But verbally they consented; and two of them separately, as though by arrangement, remarked in the self-same words, 'We consider ourselves morally bound to do it.'

When I said to the students engaged to take the Census, that besides the usual aims of the Census the aim of philanthropy should also be kept in view, my communication produced a similar effect on them. I noticed that when we talked about it, they were ashamed to look me in the face, as one is ashamed to look a decent man in the face when he talks nonsense. My article had the same effect on the newspaper editor to whom I gave it; and also on my son, and on my wife, and on the most diverse people. All, for some reason, felt uncomfortable, but all considered it necessary to approve of my idea; and all, after expressing approval, at once began to express doubts of its success; and all without exception began also to condemn the indifference and coldness of society and of everybody, except (evidently) themselves.

In the depth of my soul I continued to feel that all this

was not the right thing; and that nothing would come of it; but the article was printed, and I undertook to take part in the Census. First I had started the affair, and now it drew me along.

## IV

At my request they allotted me for the Census the district containing Rzhánof House. I had long heard of it as a den of most terrible poverty and vice, and had therefore asked the organisers to let me take that district.

After receiving instructions from the Town Doúma, I went—a few days before the Census—to inspect my district, and easily found Rzhánof House on the plan they gave me. . . .

[Tolstoy then describes the people he met near the house—boys sliding along a frozen slope, an angry asthmatic old woman, and a jovial old man, as well as various ragged, half-naked people. He goes on]:

I stopped at one of the gates. I wished to enter, to see what was going on inside, but felt timid about it; what was I to say if any one asked what I wanted? After some hesitation, however, I entered the gate. As soon as I did so, I noticed an abominable stench. The yard was horribly filthy. I turned a corner, and at that moment, upstairs to the left, heard the clatter of feet running on the wooden gallery, first along the boards of the balcony, and then down the steps of the staircase. [The courtyard was enclosed by the house, which had a balcony all round it, looking on to the yard.] First a lean woman ran out, in a faded pink dress with turned-up sleeves and with boots on her stockingless legs. Following her, came a shock-headed man in a red shirt and very wide trousers that looked like a petticoat, and with goloshes on his feet. The man seized the woman under the stairs: 'You won't escape me!' said he, laughing. 'Listen to the squint-eyed

devil!’ began the woman, evidently flattered by his pursuit; but she caught sight of me, and shouted angrily: ‘Who do you want?’ As I did not want anybody I became confused and went away.

There was nothing remarkable about all this; but this incident, after what I had seen outside on the street: the scolding old woman, the merry old man, and the sliding boys, suddenly revealed to me quite a new side of the affair I was engaged on. I had set out to benefit these people by the help of the rich; and here for the first time I realised that all these unfortunates whom I wished to benefit, besides the hours they spend suffering from hunger and cold, and waiting for a night’s lodging, have also time to devote to something else. There is the rest of the twenty-four hours every day, and there is a whole life, about which I had never thought. I here, for the first time, understood that all these people, besides needing food and shelter, must also pass twenty-four hours each day, which they, like the rest of us, have to live. I understood that they must be angry and dull, and must pluck up courage, and mourn and be merry. Strange to say, I now for the first time understood clearly that the business I had undertaken cannot consist merely in feeding and clothing a thousand people as one feeds and drives under shelter a thousand sheep; but that it must consist in doing them good. And when I understood that each of these thousand people was a human being with a past: and with passions, temptations and errors, and thoughts and questions like my own, and was such a man as myself—then the thing I had undertaken suddenly appeared so difficult that I realised my impotence; but it had been started, and I went on with it.

## V

On the first appointed day the student Census-takers began work in the morning, but I, the philanthropist, did

not join them till towards noon. I could not get there sooner, because I only rose at ten, and then drank coffee and had to smoke to help my digestion.

[Here Tolstoy describes a dirty restaurant, the filthy yard through which he was led, and the people in the wretched lodging he visited. He continues]:

In the first lodging I did not find a single person on whom to expend my beneficence. . . . All the people were of the kind whose case one would have to look into more carefully before helping them. I did not find any unfortunates who could be made fortunate by a mere gift of money. Ashamed as I am to admit it, I began to feel disappointed at not seeing in these houses anything like what I had expected. I thought I should find people of an exceptional kind, but when I had been to all the lodgings, I became convinced that the inhabitants of these houses are not at all exceptional, but are just such people as those among whom I live. Among them, as among us, there were some more or less good and more or less bad, more or less happy and more or less miserable; and the unhappy were just such as exist among ourselves; people whose unhappiness depends not on external conditions, but on themselves—a kind of unhappiness bank-notes cannot cure.

## VI

The dwellers in these houses belong to the lowest part of the town population, of whom there are in Moscow probably 100,000. Here, in this house, were representatives of all sections of this population; small employers and artisans, bootmakers, brushmakers, carpenters, joiners, cobblers, tailors and smiths: and here too were cabmen, and men trading on their own account, also women who kept stalls, washerwomen, dealers in old clothes, petty money-lenders, day-labourers and people with no fixed

occupation, as well as beggars and dissolute women. Many of the very people I had seen at Lyápinsky House were here; but here they were distributed among many workers. And moreover, whereas I had then seen them at their most wretched time, when they had eaten and drunk all they possessed, and when, cold, naked and driven from the *traktírs* [restaurants; generally low class ones], they were waiting, as for heavenly manna, admission into the free Night-Lodging-House, to be taken thence to the Promised Land of prison, and sent under police escort back to their villages—here I saw them scattered among a large number of workers, and at a time when one way or other they had obtained three or five copecks [1d. or 2d.] to pay for a night's lodging, or perhaps even had some roubles to spend on food and drink.

Strange as it may seem to say so, I did not here experience anything like the feeling I had at Lyápinsky House. On the contrary, during the first round, both I and the students had an almost pleasant feeling. Why do I say, 'almost pleasant'? That is untrue; the feeling produced by intercourse with these people, strange as it seems to say so, was simply a very pleasant one.

The first impression was that the majority of those who lived here were working-people, and very good-natured ones.

We found most of them at work, washerwomen at their troughs, carpenters at their benches, bootmakers on their stools. The narrow lodgings were full of people, and brisk, cheery work was going on. The place smelt of workmen's perspiration, and at the bootmakers', of leather; and at the carpenters', of shavings. One often heard singing, or saw sinewy, bare arms, quickly and skilfully making accustomed movements. Everywhere we were greeted cheerily and kindly: almost everywhere our intrusion into the daily life of these people was far from evoking the pretension or desire to show off and reply



curtly, which was evoked by the Census-takers' call at the houses of most of the wealthy families. On the contrary, these people replied to all our questions properly, without attaching any special importance to them. The questions merely gave them occasion to make merry and joke about how the return should be filled in, who ought to count as two, and which two as one, etc. . . .

We came prepared to see nothing but horrors; and instead of horrors we were shown something good, that involuntarily evoked our respect. There were so many of these good people, that the tattered, fallen, idle ones scattered here and there among them, did not destroy the general impression.

The students were not so much struck by this as I was. They had come simply to do something they considered to be of scientific value; and were incidentally making casual observations, but I was a benefactor, and came to help the unfortunate, perishing, depraved people I expected to find here. And instead of unfortunate, perishing, depraved people, I saw a majority of tranquil, contented, cheerful, kindly and very good working-people. I felt this most vividly when in these lodgings I really came on some cases of crying need such as I was prepared to help.

When I discovered such need, I always found that it had already been met, and that the help I wished to render had already been given: given before I came, and by whom? By those same unfortunate, depraved creatures I was prepared to save; and given in a way not open to me.

In one cellar lay an old man, ill of typhus. He had no connections. A widow with a little daughter—a stranger to him, but his neighbour (occupying another corner of the room he lived in) was looking after him. She gave him tea, and bought medicine for him out of her money. In another room lay a woman suffering from puerperal fever. A woman of the town was rocking the

baby, had made it some pap, and for two days had not gone out to ply her wretched trade. A girl who had been left an orphan, had been taken into the family of a tailor who had three children of his own. So there remained only those unfortunate, idle people: officials, scribes (copyists, etc.), footmen without places, beggars, drunkards, dissolute women, and children, whom it was impossible to help at once with money, but whom it would be necessary to get to know well, to think about, and to find places for. I looked for people who were simply unfortunate from poverty, and whom we could help by sharing our superfluity with them; but by some peculiar mischance (as it seemed to me) I did not find any such, but I only found unfortunates of a kind to whom it would be necessary to devote much time and care.

## VII

The unfortunates I had noted down, fell naturally into three classes: first, those who had lost advantageous positions and who were awaiting a return to them (there were such, both from the lower and higher ranks); then dissolute women, of whom there were very many in these houses; and thirdly, children. Most of all, I found and noted people of the first class . . . especially from among the gentry and officials. In almost all the tenements to which we went with the proprietor, Iván Fedótitch, he told us: 'Here there will be no need for you to fill in the list of lodgers yourselves. There is a man here who can do it, if only he is not drunk to-day.'

At Fedótitch's call, there would creep out from some dark corner a once rich gentleman or official, usually drunk and always half-undressed. If not drunk, he always readily undertook the task offered him: nodding with an air of importance, knitting his brows, and intro-

ducing learned phrases into his remarks. Holding with careful tenderness the clean, printed, red card in his trembling, dirty hands, he would look round on his fellow-lodgers with pride and contempt, as if triumphing now, by his superior education, over those who had so often humiliated him. He evidently was glad to come into touch with the world in which red cards are printed—the world to which he once belonged. Almost always, in reply to my inquiries about his life, the man would begin, not only readily but with enthusiasm, to tell the story, fixed in his mind like a prayer, of the misfortunes he had gone through, and especially of that former position which, by his education, he felt ought still to be his.

There are very many such people scattered in various corners of Rzhánof House. One tenement was entirely filled by them—men and women. When we approached it, Iván Fedótitch told us: ‘Now here are the gentry.’ The lodging was quite full: they were almost all (some forty persons) at home. In the whole house there were none more degraded and unhappy than these: the old shrivelled, and the young pale and haggard. I talked with some of them. The story was almost always the same, differing only in degree of development. Each of them had been rich, or had a father, brother, or uncle who had been or still was rich; or his father or he himself had had an excellent place. Then a misfortune occurred, caused either by some envious people or by his own imprudent good-nature, or by some accident; and now he had lost everything and was condemned to perish in these unsuitable, hateful surroundings—lousy and tattered, amid drunken and debauched people, feeding himself on bullock’s-liver and bread, and reaching out his hand for alms. All the thoughts, wishes and memories of these people were turned solely to the past. The present appeared unnatural, abhorrent and unworthy of attention. None of them had a present. They had only

recollections of the past, and expectations of a future which might at any moment be realised, and for the realisation of which very little was needed, but that little was always just beyond their reach. So their life is wasted in vain. One has been in this plight for a year, another for five, and a third for thirty years. One of them need only be decently dressed to go to see a well-known person favourably disposed towards him; another need only be dressed, pay some debts and get to the town of Orél; a third need only redeem his things from pawn, and find a little money to continue a lawsuit he is bound to win, and then all again will be well. They all say they only need some external thing in order to resume the position they consider natural and happy for themselves.

Had I not been befogged by my pride as benefactor, I need only have looked a little into their faces—young and old—generally weak and sensual, but good-natured, to understand that their misfortune could not be repaired by external means; and that unless their views of life were changed, they could not be happy in any position; and that they were not peculiar people in specially unfortunate circumstances, but were just such people as surround us, and such as we are ourselves. I remember that I found intercourse with this kind of unfortunates particularly trying; and I now understand why. In them I saw myself as in a looking-glass. Had I thought of my own life and that of the people of our circle, I should have seen that between us and these others there was no essential difference.

If those now about me do not live in Rzhánof House, but in large apartments or houses of their own in the best streets, and if they eat and drink dainty food instead of only bread with bullock's-liver or herrings, this does not prevent their being similarly unfortunate. They, too, are dissatisfied with their position, regret the past, and

want something better; and the better positions they desire are just like those the dwellers in Rzhánof House want: namely, positions in which they can do less work and make others do more. The difference is merely in degree. Had I then reflected, I should have understood this; but I did not reflect, and only questioned these people and noted them down, intending, after learning the details of their various circumstances and needs, to help them later on. I did not then understand that such men can only be helped by changing their outlook on life; and to change another man's outlook, one must oneself have a better one and live in accord with it; and I had just such a view as theirs, and lived accordingly. . . .

I did not see that, metaphysically speaking, they were unhappy, not because they lacked nourishing food, but because their digestions were spoilt; and that they demanded not what was nourishing, but what excited their appetites. I did not see that the help they needed was not food, but a cure for their spoilt digestions.

Though I anticipate, I will here remark that of all the people I noted down, I helped none really, though what they asked—and what seemed as though it would set them on their feet—was done for some of them. Of these I know three particularly well. All three, after being repeatedly set on their feet, are now again in just the position they were in three years ago.

## VIII

The second category of unfortunates, whom I also hoped to help later on, were the loose women, of whom there were very many of all sorts in Rzhánof House—from young ones who looked like women, to terrible and horrible old ones who had lost the semblance of human beings. The hope of being able to help these women,

whom at first I had not had in view, came to me from the following incident.

It was in the midst of our round. We had already formed a systematic plan for doing our business. On entering each new tenement we at once inquired for its master. One of us then sat down and cleared a place to write at, while another went round and questioned each person in each corner of the lodgings separately, and brought the information to the one who wrote.

Entering one underground tenement, the student went to find the master, while I began to question those in the lodging. The lodging was arranged thus: in the middle of a square fourteen-foot room was a brick oven. From it ran four partitions, star-shaped, forming four separate lodgings or cubicles. In the first of these, which contained four bunks, were two people—an old man and a woman. Straight through this, was a long cubicle occupied by the landlord of the tenement, a very pale young man, dressed respectably in a drab cloth coat. To the left of the first cubicle was another in which was a sleeping man (probably drunk) and a woman in a pink blouse loose in front and tight behind. Beyond this was a fourth cubicle, the entrance to which was through the landlord's room.

The student went into the landlord's cubicle, while I remained in the first one, questioning the old man and the woman. The man was a working printer, now without means of livelihood. The woman was a cook's wife. I went into the third cubicle and asked the woman in the blouse about the sleeping man. She said he was a visitor. I asked her who she was. She said she was a Moscow peasant-woman. 'What is your occupation?' She laughed, and did not reply. 'How do you get your living?' repeated I, thinking she had not understood. 'I sit in *traktírs*,' said she. I did not understand her, and again asked, 'What do you live on?' She did not reply,

but laughed. From the fourth cubicle also, which we had not yet entered, came the sound of a woman's laugh. The proprietor left his cubicle and joined us. He had evidently heard my questions and the woman's replies. He looked severely at her, and addressing me, said: 'She's a prostitute,' evidently pleased that he knew this official word and could pronounce it correctly. ['Prostitute' is a hard, foreign word, little used by common people in Russia.] Having said this to me with a scarcely perceptible smile of respectful pleasure, he turned to the woman. As soon as he spoke to her, his whole face changed; and with a peculiar, contemptuously rapid utterance, such as one uses to a dog, he said without looking at her:

'Why talk nonsense? "I sit in a *traktir*," indeed! If you sit there, then speak plainly and say you're a prostitute.' Again he used that word, and added, 'She doesn't know her own name!'

His tone exasperated me. 'It is not for us to shame her,' said I; 'if we all lived godly lives, there would not be any such as she.'

'Yes, that's the way of it,' said the proprietor, with an unnatural smile.

'Then it is not for us to reproach them, but to pity them. Is it their fault?'

I do not remember exactly what I said; but I know that the contemptuous tone of this young landlord of a tenement full of women he called prostitutes, revolted me; and I felt sorry for the woman, and expressed both feelings. And hardly had I spoken, before in the room from which the laughter had come, the boards of the bunks creaked, and above the partition (which did not reach to the ceiling) appeared the dishevelled curly hair and small, swollen eyes of a woman with a shiny red face; and then a second, and a third. They had evidently got up on a bunk, and were all three stretching their necks and holding their breath with strained attention to listen to me.

An awkward silence ensued. The student who had been smiling, became serious; the landlord lowered his eyes, abashed; and the women, not drawing a breath, looked at me and waited. I was more abashed than any of them. I had not at all expected that a casual word would produce such an effect. It was as when Ezekiel's field of death, strewn with bones, trembled at the touch of the spirit, and the dead bones moved. I had spoken a chance word of love and pity, and it had acted on all as though they had only been waiting for that word to cease to be corpses and to become alive. They all looked at me and waited for what would follow. They waited for me to speak the words and do the deeds that would cause the bones to come together and be covered with flesh and receive life. But I felt I had no words or deeds with which to continue what I had begun. In the depth of my soul I felt that I had lied; that I was myself like them, and that I had nothing more to say; and I began to write on the card the names and callings of all the people in the tenement.

This incident led me into a fresh error: that of supposing that it would be possible to help these unfortunates also. It seemed to me then, in my self-admiration, that this would be quite easy. I said to myself: Let us note down these women also, and afterwards, when we have noted everybody down, 'we' (who this 'we' was, I did not stop to consider) will attend to them. I imagined that we (those very people who have for several generations led, and are still leading, these women into that condition) could one fine day take it into our heads suddenly to rectify it all. Yet, had I but remembered my talk with the loose woman who was rocking the child whose mother was ill, I might have understood how insensate such an undertaking was.

When we saw that woman with the child, we thought it was her own. In reply to the question, Who she was?



she said simply that she was a wench. She did not say, 'A prostitute.' Only the landlord of the lodging used that terrible word. The supposition that she had a child of her own, suggested to me the thought of extricating her from her position. So I asked:

'Is that your child?'

'No, it's that woman's.'

'How is it you are rocking it?'

'She asked me to. She is dying.'

Though my supposition had proved erroneous, I continued to speak to her in the same sense. I began to ask who she was, and how she came to be in such a position. She told me her story willingly and very simply. She was of Moscow birth, the daughter of a factory workman. She had been left an orphan, and an aunt (now dead) had taken charge of her. From her aunt's she began to frequent the *traktirs*. When I asked whether she would not like to change her way of life, my question evidently did not even interest her. How can a quite impossible question interest anybody? She giggled and said: 'Who would take me with a yellow ticket?' [The passports issued to prostitutes by the police.]

'Well, but suppose we found you a place as cook somewhere?' said I.

That idea suggested itself to me because she was a strong, flaxen-haired woman with a kindly, stupid, round face. There are cooks like that. My words obviously did not please her. She said:

'A cook! But I can't bake bread!' and she laughed.

She said she could not, but I saw by the expression of her face that she did not want to be a cook, and despised that position and calling. This woman, like the widow in the Gospels, had sacrificed her all for a sick neighbour; yet, like her companions, she looked down on the position of a worker, and despised it. She had been brought up to live without working, and this was considered

natural by those around her. Therein lay her misfortune. That misfortune had led her into, and kept her in, her present position. That was what led her to sit in the *traktír*. And which of us—man or woman—can cure her of that false view of life? Where among us shall we find people convinced that an industrious life is always more to be respected than an idle one—people convinced of this, and who live accordingly, and value and respect others on the basis of that conviction? Had I thought of this, I might have understood that neither I nor any one we know could cure this disease.

I should have understood that those surprised and attentive faces that peered over the partition, showed merely surprise at hearing sympathy expressed, but certainly did not show any hope of being cured of their immorality. They do not see the immorality of their lives. They know they are despised and abused, but cannot understand why. They have lived from childhood among other such women, who, as they know very well, have always existed and do exist, and are necessary for society: so necessary that Government officials are appointed to see that they exist properly. They know, moreover, that they have power over men, and can often influence them more than other women can. They see that their position in society, though they are always abused, is recognised both by women and men and by the Government; and they cannot even understand what there is for them to repent of, and wherein they ought to amend.

During one of our rounds, a student told me of a woman in one of the lodgings, who traded in her thirteen-year-old daughter. Wishing to save the girl, I purposely went to that lodging. The mother and daughter were living in great poverty. The mother, a small, dark, forty-year-old prostitute, was not merely ugly, but unpleasantly ugly. The daughter was equally unpleasant. To all my indirect questions about their way of life, the mother replied briefly

and with hostile distrust, evidently regarding me as an enemy. The daughter always glanced at her mother before she answered me, and evidently trusted her completely. They did not evoke in me cordial pity—rather repulsion; but yet I decided that it was necessary to save the daughter, and that I would speak to some ladies who take an interest in the wretched position of such women, and would send them here. Had I but thought of the long, past life of that mother: of how she bore, nursed, and reared that daughter—in her position assuredly without the least help from others, and with heavy sacrifices—had I thought of the view that had formed in her mind, I should have understood that in her action there was absolutely nothing bad or immoral. She had done, and was doing, all she could for her daughter—that is to say, just what she herself considered best. One might take the daughter from her mother by force, but one could not convince the mother that it was wrong of her to sell her daughter. To save her, one ought long ago to have saved her mother. One should have saved her from the view of life approved by everybody, which allows a woman to live without marriage, that is, without bearing children and without working, serving only as a satisfaction for sensuality. Had I thought of that, I should have understood that the majority of the ladies I wished to send here to save that girl, themselves live without bearing children and without work, serving merely to satisfy sensuality, and deliberately educate their daughters for such a life. One mother leads her daughter to the *traktír*, another takes hers to Court, or to a ball. But both share the same view of life: namely, that a woman should satisfy a man's lusts, and that for that service she should be fed, clothed, and cared for. How, then, can our ladies save that woman or her daughter?

IX

Still stranger was my relation towards the children. In my rôle of benefactor I noticed them too. I wished to save innocent beings from perishing in that den of depravity, and I wrote them down, intending to occupy myself with them 'afterwards.'

Among them, I was particularly struck by a twelve-year-old boy, Seryózha. He was a sharp, clever lad who had been living at a bootmaker's, and was left homeless when his master had to go to prison. I was truly sorry for the lad, and wished to be of use to him.

I will tell how the help I gave him ended, for the story shows very clearly how false my position as a benefactor was. I took the boy home and put him in our kitchen. Was it possible to put a lousy boy, taken from a den of depravity, among our own children? I considered myself very kind and good to let him inconvenience not me, but our servants, and because we (not I, but the cook) fed him, and because I gave him some cast-off clothes. The boy stayed about a week. During that time I twice spoke a few words to him in passing, and while out for a walk one day called on a bootmaker I know, and mentioned the boy to him as a possible apprentice. A peasant [Soutáef] who was staying with me invited the boy to live with him in the village and become a labourer. The boy declined, and a week later disappeared. I went to Rzhánof House to inquire for him. He had been there, but was not at home when I called. That day, and the day before, he had gone to the Zoological Gardens, where he was hired for 30 copecks [8d.] a day to take part in a procession of costumed savages, and to lead an elephant in some show they had on. I returned another day, but he was so ungrateful that he evidently avoided me. Had I then reflected on that boy's life and my own, I should have understood that he was spoilt by having learnt the possi-

bility of living an easy life without work, and by having lost the habit of working; and I, to benefit him and improve him, had taken him into my house where he saw—what? My own children, older than himself, and younger, and of his own age, never doing any work for themselves, but giving all sorts of work to others: dirtying things, spoiling everything about them, overeating themselves with rich, tasty and sweet food, breaking crockery, spilling things, and throwing to the dogs foods that to him appeared delicacies. If I took him from a ‘den’ and brought him to a good place, he was right to assimilate the views of life existing in that good place; and from those views he understood that one must live merrily, eating and drinking tasty things, without working. It is true he did not know that my children do the hard work of learning the declensions in Latin and Greek Grammar, nor could he have understood the object of such work. But one cannot help seeing that, had he understood that fact, the effect of my children’s example on him would have been still stronger. He would then have understood that my children are being educated in such a way that without working now, they may be able in the future, by the aid of their diplomas, to work as little as possible and to command as much as possible of life’s good things. And he did understand this, and did not go with the peasant to tend cattle and live on potatoes and *kvás*, but went to the Zoological Gardens to dress as a savage and lead an elephant about for eightpence a day.

I might have understood how absurd it was of me, while educating my own children in complete idleness and luxury, to hope to correct other people and their children, who were perishing from idleness in what I called the Rzhánof den: where three-fourths of the people work for themselves and for others. But I understood nothing of all that.

‘There were very many children in most wretched con-

ditions in Rzhánof House: the children of prostitutes, orphans, and children who were carried about the streets by beggars. They were all very pitiful. But my experiment with Seryózha showed me that, living as I do, I cannot help them. When Seryózha was living with us, I detected in myself a desire to hide our life, and especially our children's life, from him. I felt that all my efforts to guide him to a good, industrious life were destroyed by the example we and our children set. To take a child from a prostitute or a beggar, is very easy. It is very easy, when one has money, to have him washed, cleaned, and dressed in good clothes, fed up, and even taught various sciences; but for us who do not earn our own bread, to teach him to earn his bread—is not merely difficult, but impossible; for by our example, and even by those material betterments of his life which cost us nothing, we teach him the opposite.

One may take a puppy, wash it, feed it, teach it to fetch and carry, and be pleased with it; but it is not enough to wash and feed a man and teach him Greek; one has to teach him to live: to take less from others, and give more; but we, whether we take him into our house, or put him into a Home founded for the purpose, cannot help teaching him the reverse.

## X

. . . The next day I went alone to see those of the people I had noted down who seemed the most to be pitied, and whom I thought it would be easiest to help; but to help them proved harder than I had expected. And, whether because of my incompetence, or because it really was impossible, I only disturbed them, and did not help them. I visited Rzhánof House several times before the final Census-round was made, and the same thing happened each time. I was besieged by a crowd of sup-

pliants among whom I was quite lost. I felt the impossibility of achieving anything, because there were too many of them; and I felt angry with them for being so numerous; but besides that, taking them separately, they did not attract me. I felt that each of them was telling me lies, or not telling the whole truth, and saw in me merely a purse from which money might be extracted. And it very often seemed to me that the money a man wheedled out of me would do him more harm than good. The oftener I went to the place, and the more I got to know the people there, the plainer the impossibility of doing anything became; but it was not till the last night of the Census that I abandoned my enterprise. . . .

That night we visited lodgings I already knew, and in which I also knew some of the lodgers; but most of the people were new, and the spectacle was new and terrible—more terrible than what I had seen at Lyápinsky House. All the lodgings were full; all the bunks were occupied; and often by two people. The sight was horrible from the way they were crowded together, and from the commingling of women and men. Many women with children were sleeping with strange men on the narrow bunks. Terrible was the sight of these people's destitution, dirt, raggedness, and terror. And terrible, above all, was the immense number in this condition. One tenement, another, a third, a tenth, a twentieth, and no end to them! Everywhere the same stench, the same stifling atmosphere, the same overcrowding, the same commingling of the sexes, the same spectacle of men and women drunk to stupefaction, and the same fear, submissiveness and culpability on all faces; and again I felt pained and ashamed of myself, as I had done in Lyápinsky House, and I understood that what I had undertaken was horrid, stupid and impossible. And I no longer questioned any one or took notes about anything, well knowing that nothing would come of it.

I suffered profoundly. At Lyápinsky House I was like one who happens to see a horrible sore on a man's body. He is sorry for the man, and conscience-stricken at not having pitied him before; but he still hopes to help him. But now I was like a doctor who has come to the sufferer with his medicament, has uncovered the wound and chafed it, but has to admit himself that he has done it all in vain, and that his remedies are useless.

## XI

That visit dealt the last blow to my self-deception. It became obvious to me that what I had undertaken was not merely stupid, but horrid. Yet, though I knew this, it seemed to me that it would not do to throw up the whole affair at once. It seemed as if I was bound to go on: first, because by the article I had written and by my visits and promises I had raised hopes among the poor; and secondly, because I had also, by my article and by conversations, evoked the sympathy of charitable people, many of whom had promised to co-operate both with work and money. And I awaited applications from both classes, and meant to deal with them as best I could.

As to the needy: this is what occurred. I received more than a hundred letters and applications; these were all from the rich-poor, if I may use the expression. I went to see some of them, and to some I did not reply. Nowhere did I succeed in doing anything. All the applications were from people who had once occupied privileged positions (I mean positions in which a man receives from others more than he gives), had lost it, and wished to re-occupy it. One wanted Rs. 200 to maintain his declining business, and to finish the education of his children; another wanted a photographic establishment; a third wanted his debts paid, and to get his best clothes out of pawn; a fourth wanted a piano to perfect himself



on, in order to support his family by giving lessons. Most of them, without defining how much money they wanted, simply asked for help; but when one looked into their demands it turned out that their needs grew in proportion to the amount of help available, and were not, and could not be, satisfied. I repeat, that this may have occurred because I did not know how to deal with the matter; but the fact remains that I helped nobody, though in some cases I tried to.

As to the co-operation of the charitable: what happened was very strange and unexpected. Of all who promised me money for the poor, and even fixed the amount, not one gave me a single rouble! From the promises given me, I might have counted on receiving some Rs. 3000; but of all those people not one remembered the conversations or gave me a single farthing. Only the students gave me the money they received for their work on the Census, which was, I think, Rs. 12 [25 shillings]. So that my whole undertaking, which was to have dealt with tens of thousands of roubles given by the rich to save hundreds and thousands from poverty and vice, came merely to this: that I distributed haphazard some dozen of roubles to those who begged of me, and was left with Rs. 12 in hand, given by the students, and Rs. 25 sent me by the Town Douma for my work as Organiser: which amounts I positively did not know what to do with.

The whole affair was at an end. Before leaving Moscow and going to the country, on the Sunday of Carnival week, I went in the morning to Rzhánof House to get rid of those Rs. 37 by distributing them to the poor. I went to see those I knew in the tenements, and found only one sick man, to whom I gave something, Rs. 5, I think. There was no one else there to give to. Of course many began begging. But I did not know them now any better than I had known them at first; and I decided to consult

Iván Fedótitch, the owner of the *traktír*, as to the disposal of the remaining Rs. 32. Being the first day of Carnival, every one was dressed in his best, all had eaten enough, and many were tipsy. In the yard, by a corner of the house, in a torn peasant-coat and bast shoes, stood an old but still active rag-and-bone man, sorting the booty in his basket, throwing the leather, iron, and other things into different heaps, and trolling a merry song in a strong and excellent voice. I had a chat with him. He was seventy, alone, and lived by his trade as rag-and-bone dealer, and not only did he not complain, but he said he had enough to eat and get drunk on. I asked him if there were any who were specially in need. He seemed vexed, and said plainly that none were in need except drunkards and lazybones; but on hearing my aim, he asked me for 5 copecks (1d.) to get a drink with, and ran off to the *traktír*. I also went into the *traktír* to Iván Fedótitch, to entrust him with the distribution of the remaining money. The *traktír* was full; gaudy and tipsy women were going to and fro; all the tables were occupied; many were already drunk, and in the small room some one was playing a concertina, and two people were dancing. Iván Fedótitch, out of respect for me, ordered the dancing to cease, and sat down with me at a vacant table. I said that as he knew his lodgers, and I was commissioned to distribute a little money, would he not point out to me those most in need? Good-natured Iván Fedótitch (he died a year later), though busy with his trade, left it for a while in order to help me. He considered, and evidently felt puzzled. An elderly waiter heard what we were talking about, and joined our conference.

They began to go over the lodgers, some of whom I knew; but they could not agree. 'Paramónovna,' suggested the waiter. 'Yes, she goes hungry sometimes. But then she goes on the spree.'—'Well, what of that?' 'And Spiridón Ivánovitch . . . he has children?' But

Iván Fedótitch expressed doubts about Spiridón Ivánovitch. 'Akoulína? . . . Though she, it's true, receives an allowance. How about the blind man?' To him I objected. I had just seen him. He was a blind man of eighty, without kith or kin. One would suppose no condition could be worse; but I had just seen him: he was lying drunk on a high feather-bed, and, not seeing me, he was abusing, in the filthiest language and in a terrible bass voice, the comparatively young woman with whom he cohabited. They then suggested a one-armed boy who lived with his mother. I noticed that Iván Fedótitch was perplexed owing to his conscientiousness; for he knew that, at Carnival time, whatever was given would all come back to him at the *traktír*. But I had to get rid of my Rs. 32, and I insisted; and somehow, well or ill, the money was, at last, disposed of. Those who received it were for the most part well-dressed, and we had not to go far for them, for they were there in the *traktír*. The one-armed boy appeared in high boots, a red shirt, and a waistcoat.

So ended my charitable activity, and I departed for the country vexed with others—as is always the case—because I had myself behaved stupidly and badly. My charity came to nothing, and quite ceased; but the flow of thoughts and feelings it caused in me, did not cease, but went on with redoubled force.

## XII

What did it all mean?

I had lived in the country, and had been in touch with village poverty; and not out of humility resembling pride, but to tell the truth necessary to make the trend of my thoughts and feelings comprehensible, I will mention that in the country I did very little for the poor, but the demands there made on me were so modest that even the little I did was of use to the people and created an atmosphere of love

and satisfaction around me, in which it was possible to soothe the gnawing consciousness of the wrongness of my way of life. When we moved to town I hoped to live amid similar conditions; but there I met poverty of quite another kind. Town poverty was less truthful, and more exacting and harsher than village poverty. Above all, there was so much of it in one spot that it produced a terrible impression on me. What I saw at Lyápinsky House at once made me realise the odiousness of my life. That feeling was sincere and very strong. But in spite of its sincerity and strength, I was at first weak enough to fear the revolution it demanded in my life; and I compromised. I believed what every one told me, and what every one has been saying since the world began: that there is nothing wrong in riches and luxury, which are God's gifts; and that one can help the needy without ceasing to be luxurious. I believed this, and wished to do it. And I wrote the article in which I called on the rich for help. They all acknowledged themselves morally bound to agree with me; but evidently they either did not wish, or could not do anything, or give anything, for the poor. I began to visit the poor, and saw what I had not at all expected. On the one hand, in those dens—as I called them—I found people whom it was out of the question for me to help, for they were workers accustomed to work and endure; and therefore possessing a far firmer hold on life than I have. On the other hand, I saw unfortunates whom I could not help, because they were just like myself. The majority of the unfortunates I saw, were unfortunate only because they had lost the capacity, the wish, and the habit of working for their bread. That is to say, their misfortune consisted in being like me.

I could not find any unfortunates—sick, cold, or hungry—whom one could help at once, except one starving woman. And I became convinced that, cut off as I was from the life of the people I wished to help, it would be almost

impossible for me to find such unfortunates, for every case of real want was met by the very people among whom these unfortunates live. Above all, I became convinced that money would not enable me to alter the wretched life these people lead. . . . And I threw up the whole thing and, with a feeling of despair, left for the country.

There I wished to write an article about my experience, and to explain why my undertaking had not succeeded.

I began it, and I thought it would contain much of value. But try as I would, and in spite of an abundance and superabundance of material, the irritation under the influence of which I wrote, and the fact that I had then not yet experienced all that was necessary to enable me to see the matter in a right light, and chiefly because I was not yet simply and clearly conscious of the cause of all this (a very simple cause rooted in myself), I could not manage the article, and I did not finish it till the present year [the winter of 1885-6].

I have to omit much that I should like to quote from Tolstoy's book; but there are just a few more passages relating to the year 1882, for which I must find space. The first of these relates to the servant question, and to the influence of the employers' example on their domestics:

We took a peasant from the village to be our butler's assistant. He did not get on with the footman and was dismissed. He found a place with a merchant, satisfied his master, and now goes about in showy boots and wearing a chain across his waistcoat. In his place we engaged a married peasant. He took to drink and lost some money. We engaged a third. He was intemperate, and having drunk all his clothes, for a long time loafed about the Night-Lodging-Houses. An old man-cook took to drink in town, and fell ill. A footman, who used to have fits of intemperance, but who in the country had avoided vodka for five years, took to drink again while living

in Moscow last year without his wife who had restrained him, and he ruined his whole life. . . .

This year in our house, a girl of eighteen had an affair with the coachman. She was dismissed. Our old nurse, with whom I spoke about it, reminded me of another poor girl I had forgotten. She too, during our short stay in Moscow ten years ago, had an affair with a footman. She also was dismissed, and ended in a brothel, dying of syphilis in the hospital before she was twenty. We only need look around us to be horrified at the infection which—not to speak of the factories and works that serve our luxury—we by our luxury directly and immediately diffuse among the very people we afterwards want to help. . . .

Again Tolstoy says :

One of the obstacles to all efforts to relieve the destitute, was their untruthfulness.

At first I blamed them for this (it is so natural to blame other people) but a single word from a remarkable man—Soutáef—who was staying with me at the time, explained the case to me, and showed me where the real cause of my failure lay. . . . It was at the time when my self-delusion was at its height. I was sitting at my sister's; Soutáef was also there, and my sister was asking me about my undertaking. . . . I told her how we were going to look after the orphans and old folk, to send back to their villages peasants who could not get on here; how we should make the path of reform easy for the vicious, and how, if only this affair succeeded, not a single man in Moscow would be left without help. My sister sympathised with me, and we talked about it. During this conversation I glanced at Soutáef. Knowing his Christian life and the importance he attaches to charity, I expected his approval, and I spoke so that he should understand me. I addressed my sister, but what I said was meant rather for him. He sat immovable in his black, tanned sheepskin coat which, peasant-fashion, he wore indoors as well as outside, but he seemed not to hear us, and to be absorbed in his own thoughts. His small eyes were dim, as though directed inwards. Having said my say, I turned to him and asked what he thought of the matter.

'It's all useless,' said he.

'Why?'

'The whole Society you're starting will be no use; and no good will come of it,' repeated he with conviction.

'Why not? Why will it be no use to help thousands, or even hundreds, of unfortunates? Is it bad to clothe the naked and feed the hungry, as the Gospel tells us to?'

'I know, I know! But you're not doing the right thing. Is that the way to help? You go out walking, and a man asks you for 20 copecks [5d.]. You give it. Is that charity? Give him spiritual charity; teach him! But what have you done? Merely got rid of him!'

'No, that's not what we are talking about. We want to find out the need that exists, and to help with money and work, and to find employment for those who require it.'

'With those people you won't do anything that way.'

'What do you mean? Are they to be left to die of cold and hunger?'

'Why should they die? Are there so many of them?'

'Many of them!' said I, thinking he treated the matter so lightly because he did not know what an immense number there are. 'Do you know that in Moscow alone there are, I suppose, some 20,000 cold and hungry people? And in Petersburg, and in other towns . . .!'

He smiled.

'Twenty thousand! And how many homes are there in Russia alone? A million?'

'Well, what of it?'

'What of it!' His eyes gleamed, and he became animated. 'Why, let us divide them among us. I am not rich, but I will at once take two. There is that lad you had in your kitchen. I have asked him, but he won't come. If there were ten times as many, we could place them all. You take one, I'll take another. We could go to work together. He would see how I work, and would learn how to live. We would sit at one table, and he would hear a word now from me and now from you. That is charity, but your scheme is quite useless.'

That simple remark struck me. I could not but acknowledge its justice. . . .

Indeed, I drive out in an expensive fur-coat, perhaps in my own carriage; or a man who has no boots sees my Rs. 2000 lodgings, or even merely sees that I give Rs. 5 without regret, because it comes into my head to do so; and he knows that if I give away roubles like that, it is because I have collected many, and have a lot of superfluous ones I have not given away, but on the contrary have extracted with ease from other people. What can he see in me, but a man who has taken what ought to be his? And what feeling can he have towards me, but a wish to get back as many as possible of the roubles I have taken from him and from others? I want to get into touch with him, and complain that he is not frank; but I fear to sit on his bed, lest I should get lice or be infected, and I daren't let him into my room. When he comes, hungry, to see me, he has to wait in the hall (if he is lucky) or in the porch. Yet I say he is to blame that I cannot get into touch with him, and that he is not frank!

That is all I can quote of this very remarkable book.

Of Soutáef, the peasant spoken of above, and of his visit to Tolstoy, mention is made in a letter from the Countess to her sister, written 30th January 1882:

Yesterday we had a stiff evening party, the Princess Golitzin with her daughter and husband, Samárina with her daughter, young Mansóúrof, Homyakóva, the Sverbéyefs, etc. Such evenings are very dull, but we were helped by the presence of a peasant-sectarian Soutáef, about whom all Moscow is now talking, and who is taken everywhere and preaches everywhere. There is an article about him by Prougávin in *Russian Thought*. He is really a remarkable old man. Well! he began to preach in the study, and every one scuttled thither from the drawing-room, and so the evening passed off. . . .

. . . What a quantity and variety of people come to see us: authors and painters, *le grand monde*, Nihilists, and all sorts of others!

Apropos of Tolstoy's passing mention of Sarah Bernhardt in *What Then Must We Do?* I am tempted to



reproduce the account given by N. Káshkin, critic and Professor of Theory of Music at the Moscow Conservatoire, of his visit to Tolstoy in the winter of 1881, when Sarah Bernhardt was acting at the Big Theatre in Moscow. Her arrival had been prefaced by an amount of advertising never before known in Russia. All the tickets had been sold out. Speculation in them ran high, and they changed hands at fancy prices :

At the very height of the scramble for tickets I happened to be at the Tolstoys' house one evening, and at the tea-table in the presence of visitors, the Count, among other conversation, indignantly told how one aristocratic Moscow family, utilising their acquaintance with the General-Governor, Prince V. A. Dolgorouky, obtained a box on the ground-floor and then re-sold it at a high price. Tolstoy was altogether in an excited state and spoke much about dramatic art.

It was not simple table-talk, but a whole lecture on the subject, evidently premeditated. And it was delivered powerfully and well. The Count treated the contemporary theatre with complete condemnation, and minutely proved the falsity of dramatic art in general. When he had finished, general silence reigned for some time. Then he addressed me across the table.

'Are you going to see Sarah Bernhardt?'

'Of course!' replied I.

This evoked from Tolstoy something in the nature of an angry exclamation, and he even struck the table slightly with his fist. But after a little while, amid general silence, his face lit up with a most good-humoured smile and he said :

'And do you know, I am awfully sorry that I'm not going!'

It is, however, high time to bring this chapter to an end. We have seen Tolstoy possessed of his new faith, and faced by the great modern problem—poverty among a large city-population living in complex economic conditions. He tried to solve it, and though he failed utterly, his experience was not wasted. It affected his life, and it has

affected the lives of others, for it would be hard to name a book that did more than *What Then Must We Do?* to make it plain that existing social conditions are unendurably wrong, and that we must not rest till they are changed.

Tolstoy's impetuous rush at a practical solution led to nothing; and he soon ceased to try to deal with the problems of destitution and unemployment, except by persuading people in general to be industrious and frugal, and to abstain from acquiring or holding property, or taking any share in Governments 'which exist to oppress the people.' He never unravelled the economic question; and with reference to the destitute and unemployed, he soon came to feel that what they most need is such a change of heart and mind as will make them desirable workmen. He never attempted to plan any such organisation as is mapped out in the Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission; and when (in October 1909) I told him of that Report, he was by no means sympathetic towards it, remarking ironically that, 'If you are going to do so much for your poor, you must have robbed them pretty thoroughly first!' The real ground of his distrust and dislike of all such attempts to deal systematically with the problem, and to organise society so that there shall be no neglected parts, and so that the feeble and unfortunate shall not be trodden into the mud, is that he dislikes the official interference with individual freedom it involves, more than he dislikes the interference with individual freedom that results from the ill-regulated scramble for subsistence that now rules the fate of the workers and the weak. He has an inveterate distrust of officialism, and it seems to him that all efforts to organise the external conditions of men's lives, divert attention from their inner needs. He sees an antithesis between the attempt to organise society, and the attempt to reform oneself and to live a good life.

To me, a Westerner, it seems that to attempt to mitigate the hard fate of the weak and industrially inefficient, in the only way that really promises to reach the bulk of them in our generation, is more likely to benefit than to injure our souls; and that the despair resulting from the age-long failure of unorganised individualist efforts to grapple with this gigantic problem, is more detrimental than even too great an absorption in the practical work of organisation would be.

But while I differ from Tolstoy on that matter, I recognise, none the less, that he has accomplished two great things: (1) he has presented the problem in a way that makes it difficult for any one to remain unaware of it, and (2) he has aroused the conscience of many, and caused them to feel personal responsibility in the matter.

He is profoundly right when he points out how much character and view of life, or 'religion' as he calls it, has to do with matters often regarded as purely economic. The best possible organisation of society will not work unless the officials are imbued with a sense of their duty; and they are not likely to remain so imbued long, unless they have an outlook on life which makes it reasonable for them to spend their energies in the service of others.

Tolstoy has aroused in many hearts the desire to straighten the crooked places of the earth. He has carried 'conviction of sin' to people whom no Church dignitaries would have reproached, and whom the late Samuel Smiles would have admired. But in many cases the steam he has generated has run to waste, for lack of an efficient engine. And when, as a result of years of systematic study, a carefully designed engine (such as the scheme described in the Minority Report) is at last prepared, it seems a pity that he should treat it scornfully. One does not expect him to attend to all the good projects that are devised, but one regrets that he should throw cold water on efforts really complementary to his own. But, as he once said to me

of an eminent man he admired, but whose shortcomings he perceived, 'God needs our limitations.' Perhaps he could not have done his own work of arousing men to a perception of the need of change, and to a recognition of the fact that the best use of an individual life is to make the life of humanity better, had he been more alive to the practical problem of directing the resources of civilisation to the creation of conditions in which all may have a chance to enjoy the things of the mind, uncrushed by excessive struggles for daily bread. Moreover, the danger Tolstoy sees of our enslavement by a bureaucracy, is real; though the other danger of not dealing systematically with society's festering wounds is far more terrible and urgent.

Though I believe that the only machine strong enough to meet the social need is a Governmental machine, it yet remains true that unless the steam to drive it be generated in the consciences of the citizens, it can never work; for under any system, the price of liberty must be 'eternal vigilance.'

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## CHAPTER V

### RENUNCIATIONS

State of Russia. W. Lloyd Garrison and Tolstoy. Correspondence with wife. [1882] N. N. Gay. N. K. Mihaylovsky. Proudhon. Letters from Stráhof. Letters to the Countess. *Confession* prohibited. Letters from Tourgénéf. *The Post-Box*. Buys house. Letter to V. I. Alexéyef. Studies Hebrew. Boborykin's recollections. Title dropped. A bibliographical difficulty. Letter to Engelhardt. Saintship. Anna Seuron. Tolstoy's appearance. Manual labour. At breakfast. Clothes. Mistaken for peasant. Amiability. [1883] Effects of Tolstoy's teaching. A fire. Anna Seuron's criticism. Non-use of money. Tolstoyans. Visit to Samára. Tourgénéf's last letter. Tolstoy refuses jury-service. Tourgénéf Lecture prohibited. Dancing and boot-making. Stendhal. Dostoyévsky. Pressensé. [1884] *What do I Believe?* forbidden. Publication of *The Decembrists*. V. G. Tchertkóf. Portrait by Gay. Church rites. Birth and baptism of daughter, Alexandra. Family friction. Visits Gay. Estate management. Two pilgrims. Correspondence with Countess. Relation to property. P. I. Birukóf. 'Trust your reason.' Life in Moscow. Publishing. A letter to the Countess.

THE early 'eighties were such important years in Tolstoy's life, that they must inevitably fill a large space in his biography.

With the accession of Alexander III to the throne, and of Pobedonóstsef to the Procuratorship of the Holy Synod, Russia entered on a period of political, social, and moral stagnation in which it seemed as though all that breathed

of life, sincerity, freedom, or progress, must die of suffocation. There was no liberty of the press or of public meeting; and no discussion of political or religious problems was tolerated. Those who accepted and supported the existing order of things without criticism were officially esteemed to be 'well-intentioned' (*blagonaméreny*), and all who were not 'well-intentioned' were dangerous, and subject to persecution. The spy and *agent-provocateur* flourished, and those Russians who rejected Orthodoxy or desired a Constitution were regarded, and frequently treated, as malefactors.

It was at this time that Tolstoy's outspoken, unflinching appeal to men's reason and conscience came like a breath of fresh air in a plague-stricken country, and aroused many to life. Though it was forbidden, Tolstoy discussed all the vitally important subjects, and did it frankly. Blind obedience to external authority was demanded by the Powers that be; Tolstoy bowed to no authority but reason and conscience. The Government relied on the brute force of Cossacks and gendarmes; Tolstoy denounced all physical force as iniquitous. The position was parallel to that which arose in the United States in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, when the Constitution and custom of the country authorised Slavery, and the religious organisations condoned or approved of it, quoting St. Paul's injunction, 'Slaves obey your masters'—till William Lloyd Garrison, with no sling in his hand but his power of expression, and no pebble but the smooth one of moral denunciation, set out to slay the giant entrenched in legality and protected by all the armed forces of the State. Garrison slew Slavery in America; and Tolstoy in the last decades of the nineteenth century dealt deadly blows to the authority of the Greek Church, and to belief in the right divine of Tsars to govern wrong. The parallel is singularly complete; for just as Garrison ceased to be a Leader when the Anti-Slavery cause passed into the domain of practical

politics, so Tolstoy ceased to be a popular force among Russian Progressives, at the time their movement became a definitely political struggle. The task of rousing an apathetic community by a moral appeal, is a different one to that of shaping the political form in which the new feeling is to express itself, and it can very seldom happen that the same man is equally fitted for both tasks.

Leaving wife and family in Moscow, Tolstoy, as we have  
1882 seen, betook himself to the solitude of Yásnaya  
to recover mental tranquillity after his slumming  
experiences. From thence he wrote to his wife:

I think that I could nowhere be better off or more tranquil. You, who are always at home and occupied with family cares, cannot feel the difference town and country make to me.

However, there is no need to speak or write in a letter about that, for I am now at work on that very subject, and if I succeed in writing it, you will read it in clearer form. The chief evil of the town for me, and for all thinkers (this is not what I am writing about) is that one has either continually to dispute and expose false arguments, or to agree to them without disputing, which is still worse. And to dispute about and expose rubbish and lies, is the emptiest of occupations, and there is no end to it, because lies are innumerable. And one busies oneself with disputations, and begins to imagine that that is work: whereas it is the very greatest waste of time. If one does not dispute, one may clear up something for oneself in a way precluding all possibility of dispute. But that is only done in quietness and solitude. I know that intercourse with one's fellows is also necessary, and very necessary; and in one way my three months in Moscow have given me very much (not to mention Orlóf, Nikoláy Fyódorovitch and Soutáef), enabling me to know people more intimately. Even Society, which from afar one coldly condemns, has given me a great deal. And I am sorting out all that material. The Census and Soutáef explained much to me. So do not trouble yourself about me. Anything may happen

to one anywhere, but here I am in the best and safest conditions.

In February he returned to Moscow for a short visit; but seems again to have been dissatisfied with the life, and to have disagreed with his wife. He returned almost at once to Yásnaya, and having written to the Countess, received the following reply from her, dated 3rd March :

. . . The first, most dismal and saddest thing when I awoke, was your letter. It gets worse and worse. I begin to think that if a happy man suddenly sees only what is terrible in life, and shuts his eyes to what is good, it must be the result of illness. You ought to undergo a cure; I say it without any *arrière pensée*. This seems clear to me. I am terribly sorry for you, and if you would consider my words and your own position without irritation, you would perhaps find a way out.

That state of melancholy used to befall you long ago; you say, 'From lack of faith I wished to hang myself!' And now? You are not without faith now; then why are you unhappy? Did you not know before that hungry, sick, unhappy and bad people exist? Look more carefully, and you will find merry, healthy, happy and good people also. May God help you—but what can I do in the matter?

In the calm of lonely country life, Tolstoy soon recovered tranquillity; and we find him, after receiving an affectionate letter from his wife, writing to her :

It made me very glad. Do not trouble about me, and above all do not accuse yourself. 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive. . . .' As soon as one has forgiven others, one is oneself in the right. And your letter shows that you have forgiven, and are not angry with any one. And I have long ceased to blame you. I only did that at first. I do not myself know why I have been so run-down. Perhaps it was age, perhaps ill-health . . . but I have nothing to complain of. Life in Moscow gave me very much, and made plain to me my line of



activity—if any still lies before me—and it brought you and me closer together than before. . . .

I fear that we may change rôles: I shall become healthy and animated, while you will be gloomy and run-down. You say: 'I love you, but you do not want that now.' It is the one thing I do want! No one else can so cheer me, and your letter has cheered me. One's liver counts for something; but one's spiritual life goes its own way. My solitude was very necessary to me and has freshened me up, and your love gladdens me more than anything in life.

It was, I think, during Tolstoy's next visit to Moscow that he made one of the few close friendships of his life, and one which afforded him great pleasure and spiritual refreshment, as well as much encouragement in his work.

Nikoláy Nikoláyevitch Gay, a celebrated Russian painter of French origin, had some time before this retired to a small estate in Little Russia, in a state of great dejection. He had ceased to paint, and had come to feel life hardly worth living. In his *Memoirs* he tells us what it was that aroused him from this apathy:

In 1882 a word of the great writer L. N. Tolstoy, *On the Moscow Census*, happened to fall into my hand. I read it in a newspaper. In it I found words precious to me. Tolstoy, visiting cellars and finding wretched people in them, writes: 'Our lack of love for the lowest is the cause of their wretched condition.'

As a spark kindles inflammable material, so that word set me aflame. . . .

I went to Moscow to embrace that great man and work for him.

I arrived: bought canvas and paints, and drove to his house . . . I saw him, embraced him, and kissed him. 'Leo Nikoláyevitch, I have come to do anything you like. Shall I paint your daughter?'—'No, in that case, better paint my wife.' I did so. But from that moment I understood all. I loved that man unboundedly; he had revealed everything to me. I could now name what I had loved all my life—he had named

it for me; and above all, we loved the same thing. For a month I saw him every day.

A letter from the Countess to her sister tells of the impression Gay made on her:

The famous artist, Gay, is painting my portrait in oils—and it is very good. But what a dear, naïve man he is, charming! He is fifty, bald, with clear light-blue eyes and a kindly look.

There were many points of resemblance between the two men who had so suddenly struck up a friendship destined to last unimpaired till Gay's death in 1894. They were nearly the same age; each, in his own line, had done great things, and both, after achieving fame, had found that it did not satisfy them or supply a meaning to life. Both had then spent years in painful struggles to find the truth, and now they were united in the conviction that they had found a simple truth capable of regenerating the world.

It was in this year (1882) that the critic N. K. Mihaylóvsky, who had sided with Tolstoy in the educational battle the latter fought in 1875, and had predicted the spiritual crisis toward which he was drifting, made his personal acquaintance.

At the request of Saltykóf ('Stchedrín') then editor of the monthly *Fatherland Notes*, Mihaylóvsky called to ask Tolstoy not to forget an offer he had made the year before, to contribute to that magazine.

'The Count,' says Mihaylóvsky, 'had not yet begun to make boots':

This did not prevent him from impressing one as a simple, sincere man, in spite of his social polish. Strange as that last expression may seem in relation to Count Tolstoy, it is nevertheless quite applicable. Real good manners do not consist in gloves or correct French. That he was a man of the world was shown, first of all, by the easy, confident way in which the

Count put aside the business part of our conversation. When I said to him, that we had heard rumours that he had written, or was writing, a tale, so would he not please let us have it? he replied: 'Oh no! I have nothing of the kind. It was only that Stráhof found a story among my old papers, and made me polish it up and finish it. It has already been placed.' And then he passed on lightly and freely to a conversation about *Fatherland Notes*, and said many pleasant things about us, without however referring by a single word to his offer, thereby as it were inviting me not to speak about it. I of course obeyed that unexpressed wish. So that I have never understood either his motives for making the offer . . . or his motives for evading its fulfilment. Apparently the one and the other were simply done on the spur of the moment, like so many of Tolstoy's actions.

The talk passed from literature and social problems to Tolstoy's letter to the Emperor on behalf of the Tsaricides. Mihaylóvsky says:

I was glad to hear an account of the affair from the Count himself, and yet more glad that by its simplicity and sincerity it fully corresponded to the idea I had formed of him before I saw him.

I had often to be in Moscow at that time, and at each visit I allowed myself the pleasure of calling on Count Tolstoy. He is one of the pleasantest men to talk to I have ever met. We disputed much and warmly, and I seem now to hear his voice. 'Come, we are beginning to get warm; that is not well! Let us each smoke a cigarette and rest a bit.' We smoked the cigarettes, and that of course did not end our dispute, but the very fact of interrupting it for a few moments really calmed it.

I may have no further occasion to mention Mihaylóvsky, so I will here quote his comparison of Proudhon and Tolstoy, who—as the reader will remember—had met one another in Brussels in 1861:

It was easy for Proudhon to believe in the people and demand of others a similar belief: he was believing in himself.

There is no such immediate union between Tolstoy and the peasantry. It was easy for Proudhon to see the wrong side of civilisation, when that wrong side weighed directly on him and on those near to him. Count Tolstoy experienced no such pressure. It was easy for Proudhon to say, as Tolstoy puts it, that 'among the labourers there is more strength and more consciousness of right and goodness, than among the lords, barons, bankers, and professors.' It was easy for Proudhon to say that, for his father was a cooper and his mother a cook, and he himself a compositor, and he was entitled to say to a Legitimist: 'I am descended from fourteen generations of peasants; show me a family that has had as many honourable ancestors!' But Count Tolstoy is rather in the position of the Legitimist who received that rebuff. Setting aside the question of the correctness or incorrectness of the conclusions arrived at by Proudhon or by Count Tolstoy, and granting that they may both be as far from the truth as the cave-men are from Count Tolstoy, note only the following: that all his circumstances, all the conditions of his life from the cradle upwards, drove Proudhon to the conclusions which he accounted true; while all the conditions of Count Tolstoy's life, on the contrary, drove and drive him away from the conclusions he holds true. If, in spite of all that, he arrived at them, then, however he may have contradicted himself, you must recognise that he is an honourable and powerful thinker, in whom we may feel confidence, and whom we are bound to respect.

Among the very few men who were intimate with Tolstoy and understood and appreciated his views, but were strong enough to hold their own opinions and to defend them against him, N. N. Stráhof, of whom repeated mention has been made in the previous part of this *Life*, was pre-eminent. In their intercourse it was by no means always Tolstoy who was teacher and Stráhof pupil. In fact, it may safely be said that the latter influenced and informed the former considerably, and there are many pages in Tolstoy's didactic works which are mainly a repetition of Stráhof's views.

There is, for instance, a striking similarity to views Tolstoy has since expressed, in the following letter from Stráhof to him, dated 31st March 1882 :

The whole movement which fills the last period of history—Liberal, Revolutionary, Socialist, and Nihilist—has always in my eyes had merely a negative character. Denying *it*, I deny a negation. I have often thought about it, and been amazed to find that Liberty and Equality—those idols of many : those standards of battle and Revolution—do not in reality contain any attractive or positive content, which could give them real value or enable them to become positive aims. Beginning before the Reformation and down to our time, all that people have achieved is (as you say) not nonsense, but a gradual destruction of certain forms composed in the Middle Ages. For four centuries this disintegration has been going on, and it must end in a complete fall. During those four centuries nothing positive has appeared, or now exists anywhere in Europe. The newest thing is in America ; and is the selling of votes and the buying of places, etc. Society is held together by its old elements : remains of beliefs, patriotism and morality, which little by little are losing their bases. . . .

People live in that strange position. Life to-day contains a contradiction. It is possible only because man in general is able to exist without internal harmony. . . .

Another letter from Stráhof, dated 21st April, though it formed part of a controversy between the two writers, again contains a statement of views which might well have been written by Tolstoy himself :

What does a Christian say ? ‘ I want no property, I want no dominion over others, I do not want to judge, or kill, or take taxes.’ [Exactly Tolstoy’s view.] These are holy aspirations which it is impossible to condemn. But what is said by those deniers whom I reject ? ‘ I do not wish any one to have dominion over me. I do not wish to be judged, or killed, or to pay taxes.’ The difference is great, and how can the two things be confused ? The source of the one set of wishes is self-denial ; the source of the other, sheer egotism. . . . The

Christian's wishes can always be fulfilled, for their essence lies in a change within us ; but the wishes of the egotist are unattainable, for they require alterations in the whole world, and alterations impossible for the world. . . .

Tolstoy's ardour in controversy has often been mentioned, and largely accounts for the comparatively small number of close and intimate friends he has kept from among the many who have appreciated, admired and loved him, and have acknowledged their spiritual and mental indebtedness to him. Even in the case of Stráhof, who had rendered him many services, who was much attached to him, and who on many important matters agreed with him, there was considerable tension, as we have seen ; and it was only due to Stráhof's devotion to Tolstoy that the friendship endured till the death of the former in 1896.

In one letter Stráhof says :

When I left you and went to the Crimea, I often recalled your saying, 'He that is not with me, is against me,' and the words in your letter, that I am 'worse than a Positivist' ; and I thought, 'He is excommunicating me from the Church ! But what can I do ? I think as I do, because I cannot think otherwise, and do not shuffle with myself. Well, let him reject me—I will remain true to him.' Forgive me for still wishing to express my affection for you ; but I am almost ready to be silent and to respect you in secret.

Quite another phase of Tolstoy's many-sided nature shows itself in a letter he wrote to his wife from Yásnaya early in April of this same year, 1882, describing the awakening of spring, and the kind of life he was living :

I went out to-day at eleven, and was intoxicated by the beauty of the morning. It was warm and dry. Here and there in the frost-glaze of the footpaths, little spikes and tufts of grass show up from under the dead leaves and straw ; the buds are swelling on the lilacs, the birds no longer sing at random, but have already begun to converse about something, and round the sheltered corners of the house and by the

manure heaps, bees are humming. I saddled my horse and rode out.

In the afternoon I read, and then went to the apiary and the bathing-house. Everywhere grass, birds, honey-bees; no policemen, no pavement, no cabmen, no stinks, and it is very pleasant—so pleasant that I grow sorry for you, and think that you and the children must certainly come here earlier, and I will remain in Moscow with the boys. For me, with my thoughts, it is equally good or bad everywhere; and as for my health, town can have no effect on it, but it has a great effect on yours and the children's.

In May the Countess with her daughters and the younger sons really moved to Yásnaya, as Tolstoy had suggested, while he remained in Moscow with the older lads, who were studying in school and at the University. He was at this time planning to get his *Confession* published in the magazine, *Russian Thought*, and he wanted to be within reach of the printer while revising the proofs. The attempt to publish the book was baffled by the Spiritual Censor, the Archpriest Sérgievsky, who had the sheets destroyed after they had already been printed. *Confession* was the first of a long series of Tolstoy's works which were for many years known in Russia only from 'illegal' copies smuggled into the country, or copied by hand, or hectographed or lithographed in secret. The book was, however, printed in Russian by the firm of Elpidine at Geneva, and immediately translated into other languages.

Since the beginning of 1882, Tourgénéf had been very ill, and many troubles had befallen him. 'It is as if a wheel had seized me and was beginning to drag me into the machine,' wrote he to Polónsky. But his interest in Tolstoy never waned: it was still the same feeling of extreme admiration for the novelist, mixed sentiments towards the man, and perplexity at, as well as dislike of, the new interests and studies that had become all-

important to the younger man. To D. V. Grigoróvitch, Tourgénéf wrote on 29th March 1882: 'I hope you and L. Tolstoy have again come together. He is a very queer fellow, but undoubtedly a genius, and the kindest of men.'

At Tourgénéf's desire, Tolstoy sent him a copy of *Confession*. He asked him to read it without being wroth, and to try to regard it from its author's point of view. Tourgénéf replied:

I will certainly read your article in the way you wish. I know it to be written by one who is very wise and very sincere; I may not agree with him, but first of all I will try to understand him, and to enter fully into his position. That will be more instructive and interesting than to measure him by my own foot-rule, or to search for differences between us. To be wroth would be quite unthinkable: only young folk get wroth, who imagine that there is no light but what they see from their own window. . . .

Having read the book, he wrote to D. V. Grigoróvitch on 31st October 1882:

A few days ago I received, through a very charming Moscow lady, that *Confession* of Leo Tolstoy's which the Censor has forbidden. I read it with the greatest interest. It is remarkable for its sincerity, truthfulness and strength of conviction. But it is built on false premises, and ultimately leads to the most sombre denial of all human life. . . This too is, in its way, a kind of Nihilism.

I am surprised that Tolstoy, who among other things rejects art, surrounds himself with artists, and I wonder what he can get from conversation with them? Yet, all the same, he is perhaps the most remarkable man in contemporary Russia.

That Tolstoy's outlook on life 'ultimately leads to the most sombre denial of life,' is a statement that has often been made, but of which he is a living contradiction. For



though it is true that he suffered greatly, and alienated many friends by his strong views and scathing criticism—it remains true that, in general, his nature was kindly and genial, his outlook hopeful, and his influence stimulating. Life in his vicinity was stirring and interesting, and his keen humour and the good spirits which bubbled up after each fit of depression, were always infectious. It is a secret hidden from many, but well illustrated by Tolstoy's life, that exertion for impersonal aims and strenuous concern for life's widest interests, tends to promote the enjoyment of the common joys and relaxations of life.

Among Tolstoy's amusements, *The Post-Box*, instituted in the autumn of 1882, must be mentioned. Besides the Tolstoys, their cousins the Kouzmínskys spent every summer at Yásnaya; and the following letter to P. I. Birukóf from Tolstoy's sister-in-law, T. A. Kouzmínsky (the Tánya of the earlier part of this story), tells how *The Post-Box* arose:

As both our families were numerous, and contained many young people between fifteen and twenty years of age, plenty of things were always happening, and it often occurred that we wanted to make fun of something, publish some secret, or praise or blame something; and so it was agreed among the young folk that during the week any one might write anything he or she liked, without of course signing their names. On Sunday evenings, at tea, some one would read all these productions aloud. It was always one of us three elders: Leo Nikoláyevitch, my sister, or myself who read. . . . The contributions were long or short notes, in prose or verse; and the themes were most various: sad, poetic or humorous. Secrets were exposed; occurrences described. Sometimes a whole sheet was written in imitation of a newspaper, with leading articles and paragraphs about arrivals. But for the most part the works appeared in separate scraps. My sister nearly always wrote in verse. Leo Nikoláyevitch also sometimes wrote for us, and was much interested in *The Post-Box*, and always listened to it all with attention. I have

kept some of his productions: for instance, *The Register of the Mentally Afflicted*, in which he described us all as lunatics, naming each of us by a number. He began with himself. He did it all comically, with Latin names for the diseases, etc.

The following is a translation of one of his contributions :

It was fine and sunny weather,  
We were happy all together  
Here at Yásnaya.

Of a sudden, thought Tatiána<sup>1</sup>  
That in Yásnaya Polyána  
One can't always stay.

'Soon or later,' thought Tatiána,  
'All the kids must in some manner  
Get certificates.'

'Yes! the girls must have good teaching,  
Very thorough and far-reaching.  
Get them a Mam'selle!'

Books and papers were obtained,  
And the girls were to be trained,  
If they liked or not.

First the lessons went not badly,  
But things turned out very sadly  
With the Scripture tales.

Mary stuck, in spite of trying;  
Véra loudly kept on crying:  
'Scripture I can't bear!'

<sup>1</sup> Tatiána Kouzmínsky, writer of the letter just quoted.

Véra having vainly striven  
To make out why man was driven  
From his Paradise,

Said, 'From Scripture we must learn  
How from Eden God did turn  
Eve and Adam both.'

'But to learn it quite affronts me;  
Cannot any one at once see,  
*Que ce n'est pas vrai ?*'

Think! for what He turned out Adam?  
Have we not been told by Madam?  
—*Pour curiosité!*'

'From the Garden they were turned  
'Cos they had become too learn'd;  
Surely, then, I won't!'

And her mother's quite perplexed  
What she is to answer next;  
Really, it is hard!

. . . . .

After it had been decided that the family must winter in Moscow as a regular thing, Tolstoy, as a matter of convenience and economy, decided to purchase a town-house, and succeeded in finding one for about Rs. 36,000 [£3600] which, after much alteration, suited very well. It was a large wooden house with a considerable garden, and its own water-supply from a well. It is situated in Dólgo-Hamónitchesky Side-Street, in the S.W. outskirt of the town, not far from the river Moskvá. The Countess once told me that the house was well chosen and cheaply purchased; but that in the extensive alterations he made,

her husband, with characteristic inattention to details, altogether overlooked the fact that it was necessary to have rooms for the servants.

The following letter to her sister tells of the Countess's first impressions of the new house :

We came to Moscow on 8 October. The journey went well. In Moscow Lyóvotchka met us with two carriages: at home a dinner was ready, and tea, and there was fruit on the table. But after the journey and a week's packing, I was so tired and had become so irritable that nothing pleased me, but quite the contrary. . . . Lyóvotchka was at first very merry and animated; now he is learning Hebrew and has become more gloomy.

A letter from Stráhof to Danílevsky, dated 5th November, says :

Tolstoy is in good spirits. He has bought a house in Moscow, settled down in it, and writes that he is at peace. He is learning Hebrew. I am very glad on his account, though I always fear for him: he lives so ardently, and with such effort and such strong emotions.

A letter of Tolstoy's to V. I. Alexéyef, written about this time, tells us something of the family which was then fast growing up :

Some of the family have been ill, but now it is all right, and more or less as of old. Seryózha [Sergius] works much and believes in the University. Tánya [Tatiána], semi-kind, semi-serious, and semi-wise, does not grow worse, but rather better. Ilúsha [Ilyá] is idle, grows, and his soul is not yet strangled by the organic processes [of puberty]. Lyólya [Leo] and Másha [Mary] seem to me better; they did not catch my harshness as the elder ones did, and I think they are growing up under better conditions, and are better and kinder than the elder ones. The laddies are fine little chaps, and healthy. I am fairly quiet, but often feel sad at the triumphant, self-assured insanity of the life around me. It often seems strange that it is granted

to me to see their insanity so clearly, while they are quite unable to understand either it or their mistakes ; and so we stand face to face not comprehending one another, and wondering at and condemning one another. But they are a legion, while I am alone. They are seemingly gay, and I am seemingly sad. All this time I am very assiduously engaged on Hebrew, and have almost mastered that language. I already read and understand it. The Moscow Rabbi, Minor, teaches me. He is a very good and wise man. I have learnt very much, thanks to this occupation, and above all I am kept very busy. My health grows weaker, and I very often wish to die, but I know that to be a bad desire : the second temptation. Evidently I have not outlived it.

Good-bye, my dear fellow—God grant you what I enjoy in my good moments ; there is nothing, as you know, better than that !

Tolstoy's desire to learn Hebrew arose from his Scripture studies. His teacher says that Tolstoy took to the work with great zeal, and grasped the language with unusual rapidity, but read only what he wanted. Anything that did not interest him, he skipped. Minor adds :

We began at the first words of the Old Testament, and, with various omissions of the kind indicated, read on to Isaiah, at which point his study ceased. The prophecies about the Messiah in that Prophet were all he required. He only concerned himself with grammar in as far as it seemed to him necessary. . . . He also knows the Talmud. In his tempestuous striving after truth, he questioned me at almost every lesson about the moral views in the Talmud, and about the Talmudist explanations of the Biblical legends. . . .

For about half-an-hour we would work as pupil and teacher, once a week I went to the Count, and once a week he came to me. After half-an-hour, the lesson became a conversation.

To Minor's surprise, Tolstoy soon began to read and understand so well, and to penetrate the meaning of the text so acutely, that on several occasions the master had

to admit, after a dispute, that his pupil had seized a meaning he himself had overlooked.

The Countess, however, remembering the physical breakdown that had accompanied Tolstoy's enthusiasm for Greek ten years previously, strongly disapproved of these studies, and wrote to her sister :

Lyóvotchka is learning to read Hebrew, and I am very grieved about it; he is spending his strength on trifles. From this work both his health and spirits have deteriorated, and this torments me still more, and I cannot hide my dissatisfaction.

In another letter she says :

Lyóvotchka—alas! has bent all his strength to learning Hebrew, and nothing else occupies or interests him. No! evidently his literary activity is at an end, and it is a great, great pity!

We get a glimpse of Tolstoy as he was at this time, from Boborýkin's recollections :

Tolstoy began with quiet humour and frankness (which showed how far he was removed from the life and habits of his family) to speak of the monstrous life of 'the gentlefolk,' and of how cruelly they treat their servants, and how in general they 'delight the devils.'

'The other day, I said to our ladies,' remarked he, "'How is it you are not ashamed to live so? A *bal costumé* at the Governor-General's. . . . Dressing up and exposing your bare arms and shoulders!'" With furs and warm rooms, they can stand it; but the old coachman has to wait for them till four in the morning in 20 degrees of frost [Réaumur]. Pity might at least be felt for him!'

This introduction set the tone of the conversation. One had to do with a man who was passing through a period of passionate repudiation of all the vain, egotistic, predatory and insensate things with which well-fed gentlefolk sweeten their idle existence. And that the first subjects for exposure should be his own 'ladies,' was quite in the order of things.

On a subsequent visit Boborykin attempted to remonstrate with him for having abjured literary art, and for not using his artistic powers; but he was met with the reply:

‘Do you know, that is like when the quondam admirers of some elderly French whore keep repeating to her, “Oh, how adorably you used to sing chansonnettes and pick up your petticoats!”’ This was said so good-naturedly, and with such quiet humour, that it only remained for me to accept it without protest.

Among other repudiations we find Tolstoy dropping his title, not demonstratively, but quite simply. When a peasant called on him and addressed him as ‘Your Excellency,’ Tolstoy replied, ‘I am called simply Leo Nikoláyevitch,’ and passed on at once to speak of the matter in hand.

About this time he received from a stranger, M. A. Engelhardt, letters written from the standpoint of a Christian Revolutionary, and he replied to them in an epistle some 5000 words long, which was, I think, the first of that series of letter-essays dealing with important questions, which as the years went by came more and more frequently from his pen, and create a serious difficulty for his bibliographers, since there is no clear line of distinction to be drawn anywhere between them and his books. Books, essays, epistles, letters and mere notes and jottings of his, copied on the hectograph or printed abroad, soon began to circulate, often without his supervision or control, and with no clear indication of what was, and what was not, intended for publication.

This letter to Engelhardt is on the doctrine of Non-Resistance, and apart from its main argument its commencement is of value as giving a vivid indication of Tolstoy’s then state of mind:

MY DEAR M. A.,—I address you as ‘dear’ not because it is customary to write so, but because, since I received your first,

and especially your second letter, I feel that you are very near to me, and that I love you very much. In the feeling I experience towards you, there is much that is egotistic. You probably do not think it; but you cannot imagine to what a degree I am alone, and to what a degree that which is my real 'I' is despised by all around me. I know that 'he that endureth to the end will be saved'; I know that only in trifles is it granted to man to enjoy the fruits of his own labour, or even to see that fruit; and that in the business of Divine truth, which is eternal, it cannot be given to man to see the fruit of his work, especially in the short period of his brief life. I know all that, and yet I often despond: and therefore to have encountered you and to have the hope, almost the assurance, of finding in you a man sincerely going the same road to the same goal as myself, is a great joy to me.

Yet more striking—if one remembers how much pride and self-reliance there is in Tolstoy's nature, and how great must have been the strain that produced such an outburst—is the conclusion of this letter. It seems to me one of the most touching passages in contemporary literature. Referring to a question often put, Tolstoy says:

Another question directly and involuntarily follows from this: 'Well, but you, Leo Nikoláyevitch: you preach—but what about practice?'

That is the most natural of questions; people always put it to me, and always triumphantly shut my mouth with it. 'You preach, but how do you live?' And I reply that I do not preach and cannot preach, though I passionately desire to do so. I could only preach by deeds: and my deeds are bad. What I say is not a sermon, but only a refutation of a false understanding of the Christian teaching, and an explanation of its real meaning. Its meaning is not that we should, in its name, rearrange society by violence: its purpose is to find the meaning of our life in this world. The performance of Christ's five commands gives that meaning. If you wish to be a Christian, you must fulfil those commands. If you do not wish to fulfil them, then don't talk about Christianity.



‘But’—people say to me—‘if you consider that, apart from the fulfilment of the Christian teaching, there is no reasonable life, and if you love that reasonable life, why do you not fulfil the commands?’ I reply that I am to blame and am horrid, and deserve contempt for not fulfilling them. But yet, not so much in justification as in explanation of my inconsistency, I say: ‘Look at my former life and at my present life, and you will see that I try to fulfil them. I do not fulfil one ten-thousandth part, it is true, and I am to blame for that; but I do not fulfil it, not because I do not wish to, but because I do not know how to. Teach me how to escape from the nets of temptation that have ensnared me; help me, and I will fulfil them; but even without help, I desire and hope to do so. Blame me—I do that myself—but blame *me*, and not the path I tread and show to those who ask me where, in my opinion, the road lies! If I know the road home, and go along it drunk, staggering from side to side—does that make the road along which I go a wrong one? If it be wrong, show me another; if I have lost my way and stagger, help me, support me in the right path, as I am ready to support you; and do not baffle me, and do not rejoice that I have gone astray, and do not delightedly exclaim: ‘Look at him! He says he is going home, yet he goes into the bog!’ Do not rejoice at that, but help me and support me!’

For indeed, you are not devils out of the bog, but are also men, going home. See, I am alone, and I cannot wish to fall into the bog. Help me! My heart breaks with despair that we have all gone astray; and when I struggle with all my strength, you—at every failure, instead of pitying yourselves and me—flurry me and cry in ecstasy: ‘See, he is following us into the bog!’

So that is my relation to the teaching and to its practice. With all my might I try to practise it, and at every failure I not merely repent, but beg for help to enable me to perform it, and I gladly meet and listen to any one who like myself is seeking the road.

The ardent hope of having found a friend treading the

same path as himself was, alas, disappointed. Their paths did not converge, and the two men never met.

1882 must have been one of the hardest years in Tolstoy's life, and at the end of it, on 22nd December, we find him noting in his Diary that he had been back in Moscow for a month, and had suffered terribly in spirit, but not in vain :

The thing that formerly seemed hard, namely, that it is not granted me to see the fruits of my work, is now plain to me. It is not only not cruel, but is blessed and wise. . . . What one does lovingly, not seeing the reward, is surely God's work. Sow, sow ! And that which is God's, will come up ; and not you—as man—will reap it, but that in you which has sown.

Tolstoy was rapidly becoming a Saint ! There are many traits in him that strongly remind one of St. Francis of Assisi ; but I do not know how to convey this, except by translating reflections and dissertations, which would soon fill this book, and would crowd out the external facts of his life, which it is my more special purpose to record. More and more he dwelt on the thought of doing God's work, and feared, rather than sought, the praise of his fellow-men.

At this point of the story, a new witness must be introduced to the reader—the widow of a Frenchman named Seuron, and a grand-niece of Weber, the composer. Having a son to support, she took a place as governess with the Tolstoys, which she retained for some six years. Conventional, narrow-minded, observant, lively, and indiscreet, Mme. Anna Seuron's testimony has to be treated with great caution. Still she is one of the very few who, after actually living in the family, put their experience on record ; and she certainly helps us to understand certain phases of Tolstoy's conduct and character. Her book has been particularly useful to writers like Merezhkóvsky, who without knowing Tolstoy personally when they wrote about

him, have sought to depreciate him ; for various bits of her hasty writing can easily be twisted to suit a venomous purpose—though she herself is not malignant, and again and again testifies to Tolstoy's nobility of character. Indeed, considering that she wrote after the Countess Tolstoy had dismissed her, for boxing the ears of the sixteen-year-old Countess Mary, and that she wrote with an evident straining after sensational effects and contrasts, it is surprising how little Tolstoy suffers at her hands.

This was the impression Tolstoy made on her, when she first entered the family and found them just established in their new home in Moscow :

He seemed far younger than his age. He came up to me with quick step and gave me his hand : a good, firm hand, whose touch left a pleasant impression. His very small, steel-grey eyes glittered. At first meeting, he always looks one straight in the face . . . and he often produced on me the impression of a photographic apparatus.

She adds :

The eldest daughter was being taken out into Society, and the Countess herself, who notwithstanding her large family retained a very attractive appearance, was also fond of Society.

The Count hindered nothing. He was assured that everything in life is but transitory, and that even along that road his family would reach the convictions he held. . . .

She remarks that Tolstoy's searchings among the poor in the slums were not long continued. She says :

He had been seized by some feverish desire to descend into the abyss. He used to return home with a terrible headache, his eyes glittering like tiny bits of steel. He seemed quite ill. 'What must we do? What teach? . . . Words are useless! I will begin by setting an example, and will begin with such a small thing that every one will be able to imitate my work!'

'In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat bread,' is said in the Bible. And one day after eight o'clock the Count harnessed himself to the hand-sledge to which a tub was attached, and

dragging it from the yard, filled the tub with water from the well, and then slowly, step by step, dragged it to the kitchen. And the next day, and the next, he did the same. By that work he was serving others. . . . And once when there was no water, Moscovites might have seen how he, poorly dressed, descended like all the other water-carriers to the river Moskvá. The journey took him a whole hour, and he returned home dead-tired. . . . Not the work itself was important, but its purpose; and so it was with heating his stove, lighting the *samovár*, doing his own room, and cleaning his own boots.

This is her description of Tolstoy's breakfast :

His letters would be put by his place at table. He would open them reluctantly, and frequently shove them aside unread, so that some of them, at any rate, were simply mislaid.

Taking his handkerchief in his right hand, he would lift the lid of the *samovár*, into which he would pop four eggs. Then he would put coffee into the coffee-pot, pour in water, and wait till it was all ready. Gradually the room fills with children big and little, who all go to kiss their father and then place themselves round the table, sitting where they like, and talking merrily and quite freely. The Countess comes to breakfast unpunctually, always in a hurry, but always animated and amiable. But now the eggs are ready, the Count (always managing to burn his fingers) gets them out of the *samovár*; then he places the coffee-pot on the top, breaks the eggs into a glass, into which he crumbles some bread, and rapidly swallows the lot; whereas the coffee, which has been brewing meanwhile, is drunk slowly. Then comes the moment for all kinds of requests: for instance, that he would receive a tiresome visitor, who has already been four times to the house asking to see him, etc.

Of the way in which Tolstoy dressed, Anna Seuron tells us :

During the winter he found a peculiar pleasure in walking about in the poorest attire. He would go out in a sheepskin coat and greased high-boots and sheepskin cap, exactly like a

peasant; and sticking his hands in his pockets or tucking them into the opposite sleeves, would set off to visit his Society acquaintances, or would wander about the town seeking new impressions.

One day, when I was unwell, he went to fetch my son from the Institute of Oriental Languages. To avoid any misunderstanding, I telegraphed to my son that the Count would call for him at 2 o'clock. The telegram reached the Principal, and all the masters waited at the entrance. But when the Count came he was not recognised, but was told to 'sit down, old fellow!' and allowed to wait, on the locker in the hall.

When my son came, ready dressed, into the hall, and greeted the Count in French, those present opened their mouths with astonishment that a peasant in sheepskin should understand French; and it was only after the two had gone down the steps and out into the street that it occurred to the masters who were waiting to see the Count, that this was he.

Tolstoy's peculiarities in the matter of dress are again and again referred to by Anna Seuron, who watched him just at the time when his striving after simplicity and economy were accentuated by a conscious revolt against conventionality, and a deliberate breaking away from former habits; though, for the matter of that, he had always been somewhat original and wilful in his dress. She says:

His caps and hats had neither form nor shape. It was all the same to him whether one article of his dress went with the rest or not. It was so even in town, not to speak of the country! Only his blouse had to be specially long to cover the upper part of his trousers, about which he was particularly modest.

In just the same way he was opposed to women wearing low-necked dresses. His daughter (it was only the eldest who went to balls, and she only during the first two winters in Moscow) always avoided letting her father see her *décolletée*. A Charity Bazaar he termed an abuse, and regarded giving money to beggars on the street as merely a habit. But all the

same, there were some old Moscow ladies who, on account of their age, found grace in his eyes when they formed Groups for benevolent purposes.

She adds :

The Count could be extremely amiable when he liked ; but if he happened to meet a stupid man, it was all up ! He would rise from his seat and simply go away without even saying good-bye, just as if he were frightened or disgusted.

During the winter of 1882-3 Tolstoy paid several visits to Yásnaya to be alone and escape from the bustle of town. The intensity of conflict aroused by his change of outlook had by this time begun to sub-<sup>1883</sup>side. He was training himself to mildness, and ceasing to expect others to accept his views, or suddenly to change their hearts and lives.

Experience, that greatest of teachers, was showing him that he could not himself escape from his position without coercing the will of those to whom he was closely bound. This experience made him realise that a man's external position is no safe indication of the state of his soul. We cannot say, 'That man is a millionaire, therefore he must be cruel and selfish ; this man has nothing, therefore he must be a saint.' Life is not as simple as the parable of Dives and Lazarus suggests.

A letter from the Countess to her sister, dated 30th January 1883, says :

Lyóvotchka is very tranquil, and at work writing some article or other [it was *What do I Believe ?*]. Remarks against town-life, and the life of the well-to-do in general, burst from him occasionally. That pains me ; but I know he cannot help it. He is a leader : one who goes ahead of the crowd, pointing the way men should go. But I am the crowd ; I live in its current. Together with the crowd I see the light of the lamp which every leader (and Lyóvotchka, of course, also) carries, and I acknowledge it to be the light. But I cannot go faster, I am held by the crowd, and by my surroundings and habits.

This attitude towards Tolstoy's teaching is worth noting. Most of those who oppose his views have put themselves in the wrong to an astonishing extent by misrepresenting him. On the other hand, his wife and a number of his admirers have said: 'He is quite right, but we cannot do what he demands. Five hundred years hence people will tread the path he marks out.' What has as yet hardly been done, is to separate what is sound from what is unsound in his teaching, and to show that he and his followers have repeatedly run their heads against brick-walls because his survey of the ground has been hasty and inaccurate. In so far as he was right, his principles are applicable to-day; and in so far as they are inapplicable to-day, I am not sure that they ever will be applicable; for man's brain is not so made that he can frame moral codes for future societies of whose circumstances he is necessarily ignorant. Even a wise and honest man like Tolstoy, when he attempts to frame a moral code for his own society and his own age, begins by ignoring considerations experience eventually compels him to allow for. This is not a reason for not thinking, or for not testing one's opinions in practice; but it is a reason against calling one's opinion a 'principle' before testing it and finding it workable. Nothing surprised me more among Tolstoyans, than to find them treating Tolstoy's views as revelations of absolute truth, and indignantly disapproving of attempts to revise them in the light of experience. That, however, is the typical attitude of religious fanatics in general, and is not peculiar to Tolstoyans.

When he returned to Yásnaya in April, Tolstoy witnessed the effects of a fire that had destroyed twenty-one huts, together with their sheds and outbuildings. Such calamities are terribly frequent in Russia, where most of the huts are of wood, and straw-thatched. The suffering caused to the peasants, who are very poor at the best of times, is appalling; yet they are extremely slow to take

precautions, and even when a fire breaks out, seldom make collective efforts to limit its extent. Each family seems only concerned to save its own belongings, and even as to these, a fatalistic feeling prevails: 'How are we to stop it? If it's God's will that it should burn, we can do nothing. Perhaps He will be merciful!'

Tolstoy, always keenly appreciative of the peasants' best side, and sympathising keenly with their hard lot, wrote to the Countess:

One is very sorry for the peasants. It is difficult to picture to oneself what they have endured and are enduring. All the corn has been burned. Reckoned in money, their loss must exceed Rs. 10,000. They will get about Rs. 2000 insurance money, and all the rest has to be replaced by these people, who are destitute; and must be replaced unless they are to die of hunger. . . . Send Seryózha [his son] to the State Bank to find out what paper or power-of-attorney will be required to withdraw my shares, should they be needed. . . .

I have just been among the burnt-outs. It is pitiful, and terrible, and grand—that strength and independence, and their quiet confidence in their own strength. What is chiefly needed now is oats for seed.

Say to my brother Seryózha, that if it will not inconvenience him he might give me a note to Pirogóvo [Count Sergius Tolstoy's estate] for 800 bushels of oats. Let the price be the highest he sells at. If he agrees, send or bring me that note, or even reply by telegraph whether Seryózha will give me a note for the oats—for if not, I must arrange to buy elsewhere.

Anna Seuron relates that the Count gave the timber to rebuild the huts, and adds that the fire somewhat needlessly spared the village school-house, for the Count had by this time forgotten all about his pedagogics.

Little realising the fierce struggle going on in his mind as to the utility of monetary—or of any but spiritual—help for the poor, she gives us strange glimpses of his relation to that problem:



One day I saw an ancient dame digging potatoes with some sort of stick. . . . I advised her to take a spade. 'But we have only three spades in the whole village,' said she. When I spoke of this to the Count, he said that that was all right: having to lend one another a spade, trains the peasants in Christian love!

If one compared this systematic, pedantic hard-heartedness with the high ideals that lay at the basis of all his teaching, it might seem that all that teaching was merely a sickly mystical confusion.

At the same time the Count was very voluble on the subject of help to one's neighbours. Near the house stands a large maple that has been struck by lightning. On one of its remaining healthy branches hangs a bell, which rings for dinner or to sound an alarm. And beneath that bell at times poor people waited for hours to ask for help or advice. In such cases the Count would disappear as though he had been swallowed up by the earth. . . . He would simply run away from the petitioners.<sup>1</sup> . . . But under that famous bell other forces appeared. There the Countess distributed medicines and lint. Other members of the Count's family gave something to the poor, and also gave away small change. . . . Yet during those years the Count at times displayed the naively childish tenderness of heart depicted in his *Childhood*.

I am in general a conscientious translator, but when dealing with Anna Seuron's eccentric narrative I find myself obliged to employ a very free method of translation, lest I should perplex my readers; yet I cannot afford to dispense with the intimate touches she supplies concerning these years of storm and stress, when Tolstoy was attempting first one and then another method of solving the social question by moral rule and personal example. So many people have witnessed and testified to Tolstoy's wonderful patience with, and kindness to, the swarm of petitioners who day by day for many years have collected beneath the

<sup>1</sup> 'Because he never kept money, denying it in his writings': *Note by the Countess S. A. Tolstoy when reading this book.*

tree that stands beside his house, that I do not hesitate to reproduce Anna Seuron's account, illustrating as it does the perplexities in which he was landed by his rejection of money—a rejection which he soon abandoned in practice.

Here is another witness's account of Tolstoy's attitude to this problem, within a year or two of the same time. Arboúzof tells us :

In general during the summer many people of all kinds used to come to Yásnaya Polyána, particularly many pilgrims. The Count used to receive them all, and gave money to them all, and it was my business to feed them.

At first the Count used to give these people a great deal of money, to some Rs. 3 [6s.] and to some Rs. 5, and this pleased the pilgrims so much that there was no end to the number that invaded us.

They used to tell all sorts of lies to get more money ; so that latterly not more than 10 copecks [ $2\frac{1}{2}$ d.] and a hot dinner was given to any of them.

Of Tolstoy's attempts to avoid the use of money, Anna Seuron has queer tales to tell. I do not vouch for their accuracy, but they are probably founded on fact, and the judicious reader may allow what discount he considers advisable. Though she approaches the matter without much sympathy or comprehension, she succeeds in giving an impression of the spiritual ferment, and the startling contradictions which accompanied Tolstoy's attempt to break away from the ordinary ruts of life, and to shape his life anew :

Those oppressed by riches and *ennui* came in carriages, on horseback and on foot, seeking peace. Sons of good families, who had already skimmed the cream of life ; women who had buried the bloom of their illusions in unwomanliness ; poor, half-developed students who wished to imitate the Count : their intentions were good towards themselves, but what to one brings blessing, often to another brings a curse !

Tolstoy has been much blamed for leading the young

astray: in other words, because there are people who tread in his footsteps and hope that for them, too, a light will arise. In that error many come to grief! Others succeed in obtaining a kind of ethical satisfaction for themselves. I could give names to show that those who had means, were those who came off best. [Prince D. A. Hilkóf, Prince G. A. Dadiáni, V. G. Tchertkóf, A. N. Dounáef, etc.] If I have Rs. 50,000, it only aids digestion to do my own room, or plough my field; but if I torment my soul out of my body merely to be Tolstoyan, the thing may well prove indigestible.

Sons of some of the highest aristocracy discarded gold and lands and went into the desert to eat locusts. Ladies from Cronstadt, *dames de classe* [lady-superintendents or *chaperons* in a girls' school], appeared at Yásnaya and manured the fields in goloshes and white dressing-jackets. But there were very few of these. Most of them came to grief with their madness and good intentions . . . and many of Tolstoy's followers are now boiling in brimstone, or are like mice in a trap.

There is a measure of truth in these remarks. Many who tried to discard the stiff stays or supporting irons of convention and external law, and felt encouraged to trust to their own judgment without regard for the opinions and customs of their fellows, went completely to pieces; and I may testify that again and again in my experience of these people, I have had occasion to recall with approval T. H. Green's wise saying that, 'There is no other enthusiasm of humanity than the one which has travelled the common highway of reason, the life of the good neighbour and the honest citizen.'

Anna Seuron continues :

It was a strange and brightly varied scene in the new-baked Prophet's reception room in those days. . . . Like a Delphic Oracle sits the Count, his legs crossed under him *à la Turque*, or with only one leg tucked under him *à la Tolstoy*, and hears the complaints of humanity. He listens to them all: those who do not know what to do with their gold; those whose wife is too much or too little for them; those who, stung by con-

science, confess to him; to each he says a few words. But within himself it was not yet light, and just this half-light suited these modern pilgrims. At that time a snapshotting photographer might have immortalised himself at Yásnaya! All classes of society wandered in at those entrance gates near the high-road, which—in spite of neglect—spoke of grander times. One felt the landowner behind them, and the lake to the left, near the village, had quite a grand appearance.

In the village the Count was loved, it is true, but less than one might have expected. He made no demands on his peasants, but he also did nothing, or but little, for them. He was absorbed in his system, which demanded self-help. Yet he said to every one: 'Love your neighbour as yourself!'

Wise men, the world over, have broken their teeth on his teaching. How could the Yásnaya peasants become wise on it? The Count ploughed and worked with them; but often when he talked with them and was not in a good temper, or did not wish to give something (as also occurred), the sixteenth-century serf-owner awoke in him. Even when a peasant stood close to him, it sometimes seemed as though there were a gulf between them. The Count's eyes would become angry, and the beggar would go away, shaking his head disconsolately.

In May 1883 Tolstoy went to his Samára estate, and underwent a koumýs treatment. From there he wrote to his wife:

I am in a serious, not joyous, but tranquil mood, and cannot live without work. Yesterday I chattered away the day, and felt ashamed and horrid, and to-day I am working. . . .

I do not know how it will be in future, but at present my position as proprietor is unpleasant to me, as are the applications of the poor whom I cannot satisfy. Though I dislike and am ashamed to think about my nasty body, yet the koumýs will, I know, be of use to me, chiefly in that it will set my stomach right, and consequently my nerves and state of mind, and I shall be able to do more while I am alive; and on that account I should like to stay here longer, but fear I shall not hold out.

As on previous visits, he had many long talks with the local sectarians, especially the Molokáns, and frankly told them his religious beliefs. 'Never mind if I am denounced to the authorities,' he writes to his wife, referring to the danger of being accused of perverting the people from Orthodoxy, and being punished by banishment, confinement to his estate, or what not. That danger naturally did not deter him from oral propaganda—a matter much less serious than his literary offences.

Besides the sectarians Tolstoy met in Samára, he also made acquaintance there with two Revolutionaries who had been involved in the trial of 'The 193' in 1878. His talks with them turned chiefly on Non-Resistance, a matter which always set a gulf between him and the politicals, with whose indignation against the existing *régime* he otherwise sympathised.

At this time, as subsequently, Tolstoy's condemnation of the Revolutionaries led to many misconceptions. Once a gendarme-officer even ventured to approach Tolstoy with a request for information regarding certain political suspects who were known to be acquaintances of his. All that the officer got, however, was an indignant inquiry whether, because *he* had no conscience or sense of honour, he supposed that no one else had any!

It was while Tolstoy was still in Samára that Tourgénéf managed with painful effort to indite his last letter. It is written in pencil and remains unsigned:

BOUJEVAL, 27 or 28 June 1883.

KIND AND DEAR LEO NIKOLÁYEVITCH,—I have long not written to you because, to tell the truth, I have been, and am, on my deathbed. I cannot recover: that is out of the question. I am writing to you specially to say how glad I have been to be your contemporary, and to express my last and sincere request. My friend, return to literary activity! That gift came to you from whence comes all the rest. Ah, how happy I should be if I could think my request would have an

effect on you! I am played out—the doctors do not even know what to call my malady, *névralgie stomacale gouteuse*. I can neither walk, nor eat, nor sleep. It is wearisome even to repeat it all! My friend—great writer of our Russian land—listen to my request! Let me know you have received this scrap of paper, and allow me yet once more cordially to embrace you, your wife, and all yours. . . . I can write no more. . . . I am tired.

This greeting—addressed to the great rival by whom Tourgénéf had often been grievously offended, whom he had never fully understood, and whom latterly he had hardly understood at all,—is most touching; but yet it indicates how unaware Tourgénéf was of the immense human interest of the tasks which had turned Tolstoy aside from novel-writing. He did not see that if our interest in life as a whole comes ‘from whence comes all,’ it too has a right to exist. If it were possible, to-day, to destroy and wipe out from memory the series of Tolstoy’s works from *Confession* (1879) to *I Cannot be Silent* (1908), it is safe to say that the interest the world feels in him would be but a fraction of what it is. The problems of life he has faced, the guidance for life he has offered, the fact that—artist to his finger-tips—there yet were things for which he was ready to forgo his art, are what has most profoundly stirred the interest, and secured the love, of multitudes of men and women. Tourgénéf neither foresaw the great literary achievements of Tolstoy’s later years, nor realised that until Tolstoy had made up his mind about religion, it was impossible for him to return to art.

We cannot accurately weigh these things, nor say just what proportion of the interest felt in Tolstoy is due to his novels; but I am convinced that those, from Tourgénéf downwards, who have expressed regret that Tolstoy occupied himself with religious, moral and social questions, show their own limitations when they do so. Even his

novels owe a great part of their value to that craving for truth and longing for brotherhood which characterised him from childhood to old age; and only those who are attracted by *What Then Must We Do?* can really appreciate all there is in *War and Peace*.

Even after his return to Yásnaya, Tolstoy delayed replying to Tourgénéf's letter, and on 22nd August (O.S.) the latter died. It was not that Tolstoy meant to leave the letter unanswered, but—hurt by Tourgénéf's disregard for what was now most important to him—he postponed writing till he could do so in a more cordial frame of mind. Like so many other incidents in the relations between these two, it leaves a sense of indelible regret, and makes us feel how complex and difficult a matter is intercourse between susceptible people.

In September 1883 the family moved to Moscow, but Tolstoy remained at Yásnaya. He had received a summons to serve as juryman at the District Court in the neighbouring town. The following letter to his wife tells what happened:

To-day I have returned from Krapívny. I went there summoned to serve on the jury. I arrived about three o'clock. The Court was already sitting, and I was fined Rs. 100 [£10]. When called upon, I said that I could not act as a juryman. I was asked, Why not? I said, On account of my religious convictions. Then I was asked again, Did I definitely decline? I said I could not serve in any case, and I went away. It was all done in a very friendly manner. To-day I shall very likely be fined Rs. 200, and do not know if that will be the end of it all; but I think it will. I am sure you will not doubt that I really could not act otherwise; but please do not be angry with me for not telling you about it before you left Yásnaya. I would have told you had you asked me, or if the question had come up; but I did not wish to speak specially to you about it. . . . I need not have put in an appearance at all. There would have been the same fines, but then I should have been summoned again

next time. Now I have told them, once for all, that I cannot serve. I said it in the mildest manner, and even used such expressions that none of the peasants understood what it was about.

Tolstoy's refusal was intended not as a mere protest against the cruelties of the prison and exile systems, but as part of his repudiation of the whole system of public justice: civil or criminal. The act followed logically from the principle of Non-Resistance he had adopted, and which he is convinced was taught by Christ.

A very different call reached him about the same time from the Society of Lovers of Russian Literature, who were planning a meeting in memory of Tourgénéf, and wanted him to read a paper on that occasion. He agreed to do so, and set to work to re-read Tourgénéf's novels for that purpose.

In October he wrote to his wife:

My life goes on like a wound-up watch. I wake at nine, walk in the woods, return, drink coffee, settle down to work about eleven, and continue till half-past three, when I again go into the woods till dinner. . . . Then I dine, read Tourgénéf, Agáfya Miháylovna [an old servant] comes [and talks to me], I drink tea, write to you, take a stroll by moonlight, and go to bed. That is the worst time of the day. It is long before I fall asleep.

Again he writes:

I am always thinking about Tourgénéf. I love him terribly, pity him, and am always reading him. I am living with him all the time: I certainly will either myself read, or will write something about him, and give it to be read.

. . . I have just read his *Enough*. Read it—it is charming.

The Countess writes to her sister:

On 23 October Lyóvotchka will give a public lecture about Tourgénéf. It already agitates all Moscow, and there will be a tremendous crowd in the University Hall. They have re-



served four seats of honour for me in the very middle of the first row.

Her next letter told a different tale :

DEAR TÁNYA,—As you have no doubt already seen from the papers and know by rumour, the lecture in memory of Tourgénéf has been forbidden from your disgusting Petersburg. It is said that Tolstóy [the Minister] forbade it; and what could one expect from him except tactless and awkward freaks? Just fancy, the lecture was to have been quite innocent, and most peaceful. No one thought of letting off any kind of Liberal squibs. . . . Every one is tremendously surprised. . . . What danger to the Government could there have been? Now, of course, people may imagine anything. . . .

. . . Every one without exception is angry about it except Lyóvotchka, who is even glad to be excused from appearing in public—a thing he is so unaccustomed to. He is always writing, but will not be allowed to print it.

That Tolstoy, who belonged to no Party and disliked politics, and whose pronouncement on Tourgénéf as a writer would have been of permanent interest, should not have been allowed to deliver a lecture on the subject, truly characterises the *régime* of Alexander III, which sacrificed everything and everybody to the one aim of maintaining itself, and did that in a way which revolted all reasonable men.

But amid the public matters with which Tolstoy was concerned, one must not omit to tell of his lighter and more homely traits. Referring to a day in 1883, Anna Seuron says :

This evening, in the big room upstairs, I saw that wise man dance a valse with as much lightness and agility as though he were the Count of former days. And really, quite unconsciously, he sometimes shakes twenty years off his shoulders; and yet he has the peculiar talent of never appearing ridiculous, no matter

how he is dressed—even when his sock shows through a hole in his boot.

His light-heartedness on that particular evening, Anna Seuron attributes to the fact that he had just taken his first lesson in the craft of bootmaking. This occupation was part of his effort to produce more and consume less, and had for him an ethical importance quite out of proportion to the value of the footwear he produced. Before long he appeared in high hunting-boots of his own make.

He was pleased when people praised his work; and talked with enthusiasm about the difficulties of bootmaking, and especially the difficulty of threading the waxen end: 'Oh, threading the waxen end requires extraordinary patience!' Sitting on a low bench, and in all respects imitating his teacher, the Count ardently and conscientiously tormented himself, threading the waxen end. Once, twice, three times, twenty times—in vain! At last fortune favoured him, and he smiled and nodded his head.

Tolstoy was at this time engaged on the completion of *What do I Believe?* which, like all his works, he wrote and rewrote, correcting and altering again and again.

On 9th November 1883 the Countess mentions that the work is nearly ready, and adds:

Lyóvotchka has gone to Yásnaya Polyána for a week. There he will rest and hunt.

From Yásnaya he writes to his wife:

I am reading Stendhal. . . . *Rouge et Noir*. I read it some forty years ago, but remembered nothing except my relation to the author: sympathy with his boldness, and a feeling of kinship—but yet an unsatisfied feeling. And curiously enough, I feel the same now, but with a clear consciousness of why and wherefore. . . .

Of another great novelist, Dostoyévsky, Tolstoy, replying

to a letter from Stráhof (who had written Dostoyévsky's *Life*), says :

I have read your book. . . . It seems to me that you were the victim of a false and fallacious relation—not on your part, but on everybody's part—towards Dostoyévsky: an exaggeration of his importance, and (from routine exaltation) the elevation into a prophet and saint of a man who died in the midst of a most ardent inward struggle between good and evil. He is touching and interesting, but one cannot set on a pedestal for the instruction of posterity a man who was all struggle. From your book I have learnt for the first time the whole measure of his mind. Pressensé's book I have also read; but all his learning is spoilt by a flaw. There are beautiful horses: but if a trotter, worth, say Rs. 1000, suddenly proves restive, then—beautiful and strong as it is—it is worthless. The longer I live, the more I value horses that are not restive. You say that you are reconciled to Tourgénéf. And I have come to love him very much; and, curiously enough, just because he is not restive but gets to his destination—not like a trotter that will not take one to the journey's end, and may even land one in a ditch. But Pressensé and Dostoyévsky are both restive; and so all the erudition of the one, and the wisdom and heart of the other, run to waste. Tourgénéf will outlive Dostoyévsky; and not for his artistic qualities, but because he is not restive. . . . Ah, yes! I have had a misfortune which involves you. I went to the country for a week in the middle of October, and returning home from the station my portmanteau fell out of the sledge. In it were books and MSS. and proofs. And one of the books was yours: the first volume of Griesbach. All announcements have proved fruitless, but I still hope to find it in the second-hand bookshops. I know you will forgive me, but I am ashamed, and am also sorry to be deprived of a book I still require.

In that lost portmanteau, among other manuscripts were some chapters of *What do I Believe?* but so full was Tolstoy's mind of his work, that he rewrote them without difficulty.

On 22nd January 1884 he finished that book, and considering it useless to submit such a work to the Censor, he tried first printing it in a small, expensive edition of only fifty copies; for it sometimes happened that a Censor would pass a small edition of a book that was obviously not intended for popular circulation, especially if he had to choose between passing a ready-printed book, or suppressing it altogether. 1884

At first it seemed that the plan might meet with success; and on 29th January 1884 the Countess wrote to Tolstoy, who was then at Yásnaya:

Marakoúef says the Civil Censor has sent your book to the Spiritual Censor, and that the Archimandrite, who is President of the Censor Committee, has read it and says: 'That book contains many lofty truths which one is bound to acknowledge,' and that he, for his part, sees no reason to prohibit it. But I think Pobedonóstsef, with his tactlessness and pedantry, will again suppress it. It is at present sealed up at Koushneróf's [the printer's] and no decision has yet been arrived at.

The Countess's forecast was correct. Pobedonóstsef prohibited the book. But so great was the interest the news of its existence aroused, that the law decreeing that it should be burnt was not complied with. The whole edition was sent to Petersburg, and arbitrarily and illegally distributed among influential officials and their *protégés*.

It soon began to circulate in lithographed and hectographed copies. Before long it was printed in Geneva, and translated into nearly every European language; but it was long not allowed in Russia.

The only writings of Tolstoy's which were allowed to be published in 1884 were the three fragments of *The Decembrists* he had written some years previously. They appeared in a *Miscellany* issued by the Committee of the Society to Assist Authors and Scientists in Distress.

When living in Petersburg in 1857, Tolstoy had

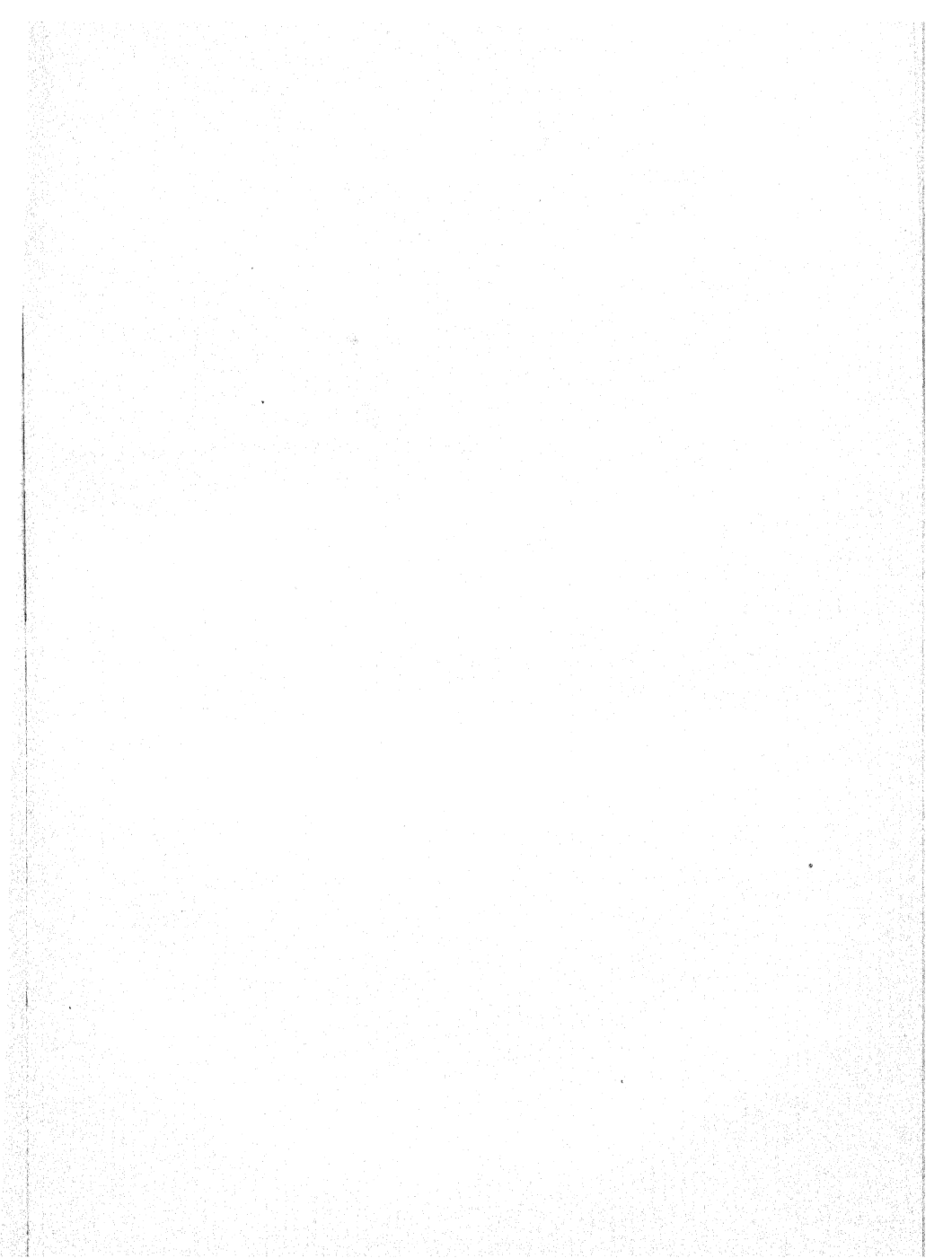
rendered Drouzhnin some assistance in preparing a scheme for the founding of that Society; and now, when it had existed for more than a quarter of a century, he thus again came in touch with it.

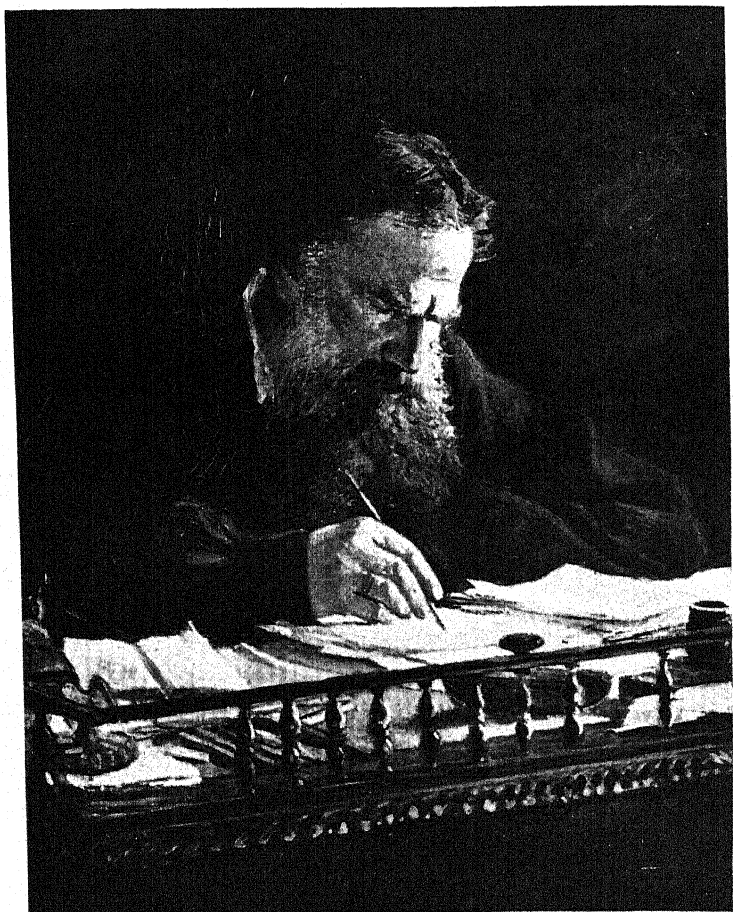
One of the first of the friends who heartily shared Tolstoy's views, was V. G. Tchertkóf, a young ex-Captain of the Guards, who on conscientious grounds abandoned the army. He was the only son of a General influential at Court, the owner of very large estates. His mother was a friend of the Empress, and one of that Petersburg circle who were influenced by Lord Radstock. Tchertkóf passed through many of the same experiences as Tolstoy himself, having been even more exposed to temptation and more spoilt by his position. He resembled him, too, in intellectual integrity and ardent intolerance of what he considered wrong. Springing from the same class, inheriting the same traditions, and faced by the same evils, the two men arrived at the same conclusions as to the wickedness of war, and on many other subjects. It was in Moscow, towards the end of 1883, that Tchertkóf, having previously heard of Tolstoy's views, made his personal acquaintance. A mutual attachment immediately sprang up between them which has lasted to the present day; and whereas to most men Tolstoy's views have appeared extreme, Tchertkóf, on the contrary, would always like him to go yet further, and to be still more rigidly logical in applying his principles. To the differences in character between the two men, I may have occasion to allude later on.

In January 1884 Gay again visited Moscow; and Tolstoy, making an exception in his favour, admitted him to his study while he wrote.

Gay's daughter-in-law tells us:

N. N. Gay and his wife came to stay with us in Moscow, in January 1884; and the day after their arrival we all went to see the Tolstoy's. Nikoláy Nikoláyevitch [Gay] kept us there till late at night; he seemed to me to be carried away by his





GAY'S PORTRAIT OF TOLSTOY.

*Moscow, 1884.*

feelings like a girl at her first ball. He gazed with enraptured eyes at Tolstoy, and wanted not to miss a single word he said; and Tolstoy treated him tenderly and as it were carefully. During that visit to Moscow, Nikoláy Nikoláyevitch painted Tolstoy's portrait while the latter was writing *What Then Must We Do?*

While the portrait was being painted and the book composed, Anna Seuron tells us :

At times the Count would stop writing for a while and would set to work to mend some old shoe, considering a change of occupation as good as a rest. At such times Gay would lie on the sofa, smoking a cigarette and studying his model. Now and then we heard them both bursting out into quite youthful laughter; while at other times they would appear as though both their brows were marked by the wrath of God.

For several years running, the family spent the winters in Moscow and the summers at Yásnaya; Tolstoy doing the same—except that he managed to live more at Yásnaya and less in Moscow than the others. He was now settling down to a quarter of a century of steady, unremitting literary work, carried on with remarkable and almost monotonous regularity. The external conditions of his life had by this time shaped themselves much as they continued till he grew quite old, except that his performance of hard manual labour—as a more or less regular summer occupation—continued for only a few years; for his absorption in other work soon drew him away from field-labour, except as an occasional relaxation.

One of the questions he had to face, now that he had come definitely to regard Church rites, including the Baptismal, the Marriage, and the Burial Services, as degrading incantations, was whether he would tolerate them in his own family. With reference to its grown-up members the case was simple; it was not for him, but for them to decide; and in fact his children—except the one whose birth I am about to mention, and who is still un-



married—have all accepted or endured the Church Marriage Service. The question of baptism and burial was a matter more under his control; but here again the Countess—who remains a member of the Church—had as much right to an opinion as himself, so that in these cases also the legally obligatory ecclesiastical formalities were always observed.

His youngest daughter, Alexandra, was born on 18th June 1884, under very painful circumstances. Tolstoy was just passing through one of his periods of acute distress on account of what he deemed the wrongfulness of the external conditions of his life.

The evening before her birth, he left home saying that he could not endure to live in such luxury, and the Countess remained in uncertainty as to whether he would ever return.

Soon the birth-pangs began, and they were long continued. The Countess sat or lay weeping in the garden, refusing to go to her room; and at five o'clock in the morning, when she heard that her husband had returned, she went to him in his study, and asked what she had done to be so punished: 'My fault is only that I have not changed, while you have!'

Tolstoy sat gloomy and morose, and did not console her. The struggle in his own soul was more important to him than life or death.

The Countess at last retired to her room, and the child was born almost immediately; but the mother's milk was quite spoilt by the anguish she had endured, and she was forbidden to nurse her baby, to which she attributes the fact that her youngest daughter seems less hers than any of her other children.

The following is Anna Seuron's account of Alexandra's christening:

Before we moved to town the little Alexandra was christened. The Count treated this ceremony with amazing indifference. Had it not been for me, the priest would hardly have known

where to baptize the infant. All the members of the family were absent. The Count was in the fields, the Countess sewing in her room. [In Russia, parents are not present at the christening of their children.] Only the nurse and the god-father and god-mother stood at the font. I made my son put on his student-uniform, and I changed my own dress out of a feeling of propriety; but it turned out to be quite superfluous: a three-rouble note was thrust into the priest's hand, and in ten minutes the whole thing was over.

Next winter Alexéy died. 'Is it not a punishment?' thought I; 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One!'

The Austrian governess's anxiety to believe that Alexéy died because Alexandra was not baptized with sufficient ceremony, causes her to misdate the former event by a twelvemonth, for Alexéy did not really die till 1886; so that if some deity dealt out vengeance in this particular case, he must at least be acquitted of having yielded to a sudden impulse!

That the friction with his family was not to any great extent due to personal causes, but arose inevitably from the clash of Tolstoy's gospel with the established order of life, is indicated by the fact that in other families, one or more members of which adopted his ideas, similar friction always showed itself.

For instance, Gay, one of the mildest of men, but a devout Tolstoyan, writes on 16th July 1884:

MY DEAR, KIND LEO NIKOLÁYEVITCH,—I have many times prepared to write to you, but, knowing your exceptional family circumstances, have refrained, not wishing to pain you. If I were to do nasty things, the kind people around me would look indulgently on my nastiness, and would be satisfied and happy in their own way. But as soon as a man wants to live in a godly way, not in word but in deed, thunders and grumblings fall upon him. I do not complain, for I know it must be so. But I did not write to you because I lacked the tranquillity which solitude has now given me.

In October 1884 Tolstoy went to spend a week with Gay, on the latter's farm in the Tchernigof Government of Little Russia. On returning to Yásnaya he wrote to his wife, who was already in Moscow with the family :

I have had a good time, and on the return journey had many good thoughts about the fact that while we still live as we are living, I must manage affairs myself. To begin with Yásnaya : I have a plan for carrying things on compatibly with my convictions. It may be difficult, but it must be done. My general argument is this : not to mention the fact that if we carry on our affairs on the false basis of private property, we must at least do so in the fairest way, not injuring others, and if possible with kindness—it became plain to me that if what I consider true and right, is really to be adopted in practice, it can only be done by people like ourselves—the rich and powerful—renouncing riches and force. And that will not be done suddenly, but by a slow gradation. This process can only be accomplished when we manage our affairs ourselves and when, above all, we come into personal touch with the peasants who work for us. I want to try to do that. I want to try freely, without violence, and in a kindly way, to manage the business with the peasants at Yásnaya myself. I think there will not be any mistake or great loss, or even any loss at all ; perhaps it may even be good business. At a suitable moment when you will listen, I should like to tell you about it ; but to write it all is difficult. I think of beginning at once : taking everything over from Mitrofán [the steward] and arranging it. In winter I should come here occasionally, but from spring I should attend to it constantly. Perhaps in this I am unconsciously bribed by my wish to be in the country, but I feel that my life is set askew as a result of my having turned aside from and ignored, a business which has been and is being done on my behalf, and done in a way quite contrary to my convictions. One cause of my ignoring it was that out of *fausse honte* I, who do not in principle acknowledge property, did not wish to be occupied with it, lest I should be reproached with inconsistency. Now it seems to me that I have outgrown that phase ; but please, dear, bear in mind that this matter is very near my

soul, and do not oppose it impulsively or without reflection, and do not disturb my state of mind. I am convinced no harm will come of it to any one, and something very good and important may result.

In the same letter he says .

The best impression I had to-day was caused by meeting two old men on the high-road. They were brothers, from Siberia, and now returning from a pilgrimage to Mount Athos and Jerusalem, without a penny. Their ages together are 150 years; neither of them eats meat. They had a house and property worth Rs. 1400 [£140], but when they went on pilgrimage the first time, a report got about that they had died, and their property was handed over to a trustee. The trustee made away with it. They returned and began a lawsuit. Then a monk told them it was sinful to do so, as their action might cause people to be sent to prison, and that they ought to abandon it, or it was no use going to Jerusalem. And they abandoned it, and were left penniless. One of them has a son, and has built another house. They were very dignified, kindly old men. Talking with them, I did not notice how we walked from Roudakóva to Toúla.

In his next letter, a few days later, he says :

I am undertaking a very difficult thing, namely, engaging in farming with a view mainly not to the farming, but to my relations with the people. It is difficult not to be carried away, and not, for the sake of the business, to sacrifice one's relations with people; but what one must do is to manage the business properly, yet whenever the choice lies between one's profit and one's relations with men . . . to prefer the latter. I am so feeble that I feel my incapacity for it; but it has so come about that it is necessary; and it came about of itself, and so I will try it. . . .

To-day I went round attending to the estate, and then rode on horseback; the dogs stuck to me. Agáfya Miháylovna said that unless they are on leash they attack the cattle, and she sent Váška with me. I wanted to test my feeling about hunting. From forty years' habit, to ride and seek was very

pleasant. But when a hare leapt up, I wished him success! Above all, I felt ashamed.

It was not till some time after this, that Tolstoy finally abandoned a sport he had ardently loved, in which he had risked his life, and which he has so often and so magnificently described in his novels.

Later on in the letter, he says :

Don't be angry, darling, that I cannot attribute any importance to those monetary accounts! Such things are not like, for instance, an illness, marriage, birth, death, the acquisition of knowledge, a good or bad action, or the good or bad habits of people near and dear to us; they are things we have devised, which we have arranged this way, and can rearrange a hundred different ways. I know that often to you, and always to the children, when I speak so, it sounds unendurably dull (it seems as though it were all well known); but I cannot help repeating that our happiness or unhappiness cannot in the least depend on whether we lose or acquire something, but only on what we ourselves are. Now, if one left Kóstenka a million—would he be happier? That life should not appear insipid, one must take a wider and deeper view. What our life together is, with our joys and sorrows, will appear to our children real life; and therefore it is important to help them to acquire what gave us happiness, and to help them to free themselves from what gave us unhappiness; but neither languages, nor diplomas, nor Society, and still less, money, made our happiness or unhappiness. And therefore the question how much our income shrinks, cannot occupy me. If one attributes importance to that, it hides from us what really is important.

The Countess's feeling about her husband's way of life is indicated by a letter of hers dated 23rd October 1884 :

Yesterday I received your letter, and it made me sad. I see that you have remained at Yásnaya not to do the mental work I regard as higher than anything in life, but to play at being Robinson Crusoe. You have sent away Andrián [a man-servant],

who was desperately anxious to stay out the month, and have let the man-cook go, to whom it would also have been a pleasure to do something for his pension; and from morning to evening you will be doing unprofitable physical work, which even among the peasants is done by the young men and the women. So it would have been better and more useful had you remained with the children. Of course you will say that to live so, accords with your convictions, and that you enjoy it. That is another matter, and I can only say: 'Enjoy yourself!' but all the same I am annoyed that such mental strength should be lost at log-splitting, lighting *samovárs*, and making boots—which are all excellent as a rest or a change of occupation, but not as a special employment. Well, enough of that! Had I not written it, I should have remained vexed; but now it is past, and the thing amuses me, and I have quieted down, saying: 'Let the child amuse itself as it likes, so long as it doesn't cry.' [A Russian proverb.]

But though the Countess could be vexed, she did not bear malice, and wrote another letter the same day, saying:

All at once I pictured you vividly to myself, and a sudden flood of tenderness rose in me. There is something in you so wise, kind, naïve, and obstinate, and it is all lit up by that tender interest for every one, natural to you alone, and by your look that reaches straight to people's souls.

Some day the story of the conflict between husband and wife—complicated by love, by custom, by new convictions and by old habits—a conflict that ultimately led Tolstoy to abandon all attempts to manage his estate, and caused him to divide his whole property among the members of his family—will be more fully told. At present let it suffice to say that his sincere desire to act in accord with the principles expressed in *What Then Must We Do?* is abundantly evident to all who know the facts. On more than one occasion, feeling that 'He that hateth not father and mother and wife and child cannot be my disciple,' he

left home intending never to return, but like St. Francis to become a beggar in the service of mankind. Before he had gone far, however, another feeling always drew him back to those whom he could not desert without arousing angry and bitter feelings. On the Countess's side there is the consideration, that had she consented to let Tolstoy have his wish, not only would the property have slipped away, but it would probably have done harm to those who scrambled for it. There was no undertaking, no definite work, no man or group of men, whom Tolstoy specially wished to support or assist. How to act, and to whom to give, would have depended not on any clearly thought-out plan, but on the fluctuating feelings of one whose social outlook had changed completely during the last decade and was still swaying and changing, and whose economic principles were more negative and denunciatory than positive and constructive. I have often heard the Countess blamed for her attitude, and no doubt she dreaded being left with her large family dependent on charity. But what should be pointed out, is another feeling which must have existed in the mind of so practical a woman—the feeling that to waste and spoil is easy, while to preserve and repair is very difficult when once established and customary rule is abandoned; and that if—as Tolstoy felt—the acquisition, holding, and spending of property is a responsibility, so also, unquestionably, is its distribution or abandonment. The Countess may well have wanted some much clearer scheme for the future management of their property than any Tolstoy had proposed. In fact she has told me that his plans, mentioned in the letters quoted above, never were in the least matured or worked out, but were no more than passing suggestions. She well knew the enthusiasm with which he could throw himself into a task, but she also knew the absolute demand of his nature, after a while, for fresh occupations and fresh interests. So that to her, his personal management of the estate did not

sound like a solution of the difficulty. If I at all regret that Tolstoy did not have his own way in the matter, it is only because so sincere a man would certainly have learnt from experience, and would not have shrunk from confessing the change of view his experience would have brought.

Among other things, I think he would have learnt to doubt the validity of some of his 'principles,' and would have come to see that the property arrangements of the world have come to be what they are, not just because men are selfish and wicked, but for reasons he has never sufficiently considered; and that though those arrangements may and should be greatly changed, this cannot be accomplished by rejecting or despising the work done by those who went before us, but rather by learning from them, and carefully discriminating between what was fundamental and what was temporary in their work.

Soon after this Tolstoy offered to transfer all his fortune, including his copyrights, to his wife, saying that he could not bear the burden. 'So you want to place it on the shoulders of me, your wife,' replied the Countess, and with tears and sorrow she refused his offer.

Telling me of this many years later, she said she regretted having refused, for it resulted in a prolonged period of hesitation and uncertainty, leading to a division of the property between herself and the children in 1891. Some of the latter have let their portions slip through their fingers and now have little left, so she thinks she would have done better had she accepted the whole burden and administered it to the best of her ability.

Towards the end of 1884, Tolstoy made acquaintance with P. I. Birukóf, who, after finishing the Naval Academy, had decided to abandon the navy, because he disapproved of war. He has since been closely connected with Tolstoy's undertakings, belongs to the inner group of Tolstoyans, and has compiled the most accurate and reliable Russian biography of his hero—a work infinitely better informed



than any previous Life of Tolstoy, and which, when completed, will be the fullest that has been produced.

At the time they first made acquaintance, Birukóf was in that curious, though not uncommon, state of mind which causes people to feel as though they were guilty of wrong-doing when they begin to practise the plain duty of applying their intelligence to religious questions. He wrote to Tolstoy, expressing his doubts, and speaking of his reason as a 'Mephistophelean tempter' destroying the beliefs in which he had grown up. Tolstoy replied :

You are wrong not to listen to your Mephistopheles. All he says is good sense. If you listened to him and continued your conversation with him to its legitimate end, you would never have a shadow of doubt, or of that two-mindedness which I consider a most dangerous and wretched mental disease. He says: 'Trust your reason, and using its immutable and logical laws, observe the bloody history of mankind fading back into eternity.' That is just what is most important always to keep in view. He also says to you, 'It is vain for you to hope to obtain welfare in any irrational, childish way. With your reason equipped with science, grasp the whole limitless world, and do not dream of infringing the law of cause, effect, and development. You have the power to direct the action of those laws for your own and others' benefit: study them, to be able to use them.' That is all excellently said, and it is the very thing I think and say. I do not know why you call so reasonable a Voice, 'nasty.' It is that Voice alone which you ought to follow.

Birukóf soon came to see eye to eye with Tolstoy in these matters, and has continued to agree with him entirely throughout the subsequent developments of his teaching.

Of the life lived by the Tolstoy family in Moscow at this time, Anna Seuron has given the following sketch :

Life in the Tolstoy family in 1884 arranged itself very pleasantly. The eldest son was at the University, the next two

were also studying, and the younger children were being taught at home. The eldest daughter went out less: but on the other hand the Count's house became a centre of attraction. Under the guidance of Pryánishnikof [an excellent Moscow artist], Drawing Evenings were arranged: and we also had Literary Evenings, to which Fet, Gárshin, and other well-known writers came. Musical Evenings were also arranged at which an eminent musician used to perform. . . .

Many guests came to the house: not the former ones, but fresh ones. Besides relations and near acquaintances, the house was visited by Professors, and by Governors of various Provinces—one of whom was once left standing for more than an hour by the coat-stand in the hall.

Tolstoy's neglect of his property did not result in the family being compelled to simplify their lives, though his example and precepts led to their doing things in a simpler, cheaper and less conventional manner than would otherwise have been the case. What it led to was, that from 1882-3 the Countess became the chief publisher of his works. Here again Anna Seuron tells us what happened.

It was at this time that the Countess began to make money out of her husband's works. The business grew with amazing rapidity, and one edition after another—by subscription and without subscription—appeared. She attended to the proofs herself, and worked at them till late at night. Of course, the thing was not accomplished without friction, and there was trouble with the booksellers, because the chief stock of the books was kept at the Count's house, from whence they were sold and despatched direct to customers. She was certainly within her right to manage matters this way, though it ran counter to the customs of the trade.

The Count behaved very strangely in this matter. It was his conviction that money was an evil, and the cause of moral deterioration. And suddenly he became aware that a vein of gold had been discovered, which had its origin in him. At first, when mention began to be made of selling the books, he stopped his ears, and his face assumed a frightened and pitiful

expression; but the Countess held firmly to her purpose of obtaining a secure competence for herself and her children: for with an increasing family and a decreasing income, things could not go on much longer. . . . At this time letters came from translators in all lands. None of them, however, got a straightforward reply as to whether the Count authorised or did not authorise their translations. 'I cannot forbid anything to any of them,' said he with a strange smile.

No literary convention exists between Russia and other countries; so that even apart from Tolstoy's disapproval of property—literary or other—any one can translate what he likes and publish it as he likes, mangling and mutilating as he pleases, and giving it any title that enters his head.

Tolstoy's genius and fame, and the fact that his writings were to be had for nothing, tempted several publishers to speculate in translations of his works; but the versions thus commercially produced were generally poor in quality, and the confusion created by the rival editions perplexed booksellers and publishers alike.

Tolstoy would, I think, have been much more widely read and better understood throughout the world, if in each country some one experienced and respectable firm had been selected and allowed to control an authorised edition, subject to such conditions as to price and quality of translation, editing, etc., as might have been agreed upon.

But this would have involved definiteness of agreement, placing the control in the hands of certain men. It would have been dealing with property: whereas Tolstoy's wish was to have nothing to do with property, which he firmly believed to be immoral, apart from all question of the motives actuating those who dealt with it.

The existing chaos of often inadequate and misleading versions of his works in all languages, often produced by people whose intentions were good, illustrates the fallacy of Tolstoy's view that things will go right of themselves, if only we abstain from doing wrong.

To commence the publication of her husband's works, the Countess borrowed Rs. 10,000 (£1000) from her mother, and Rs. 15,000 (£1500) from A. Stahóvitch. The book trade in Russia, even now, is not nearly so large or highly organised as among ourselves; and at that time for the Countess to become her husband's publisher was not nearly as unwise as it would be to do the same sort of thing in England to-day.

During the first year she made a gross turnover of Rs. 60,000 (£6000), which was considered an extraordinarily large sale, and the profit on it sufficed to remove the financial difficulties she had been faced by.

No part of Tolstoy's life is more difficult to describe than the years of transition and repudiations with which I have to deal in these chapters. He was not at rest, and perplexed his family and friends, and consequently presents difficulties to his biographers; but we are now reaching smoother water, and though the period of storm and stress was not over, it will be possible to tell the rest of the story more concisely and clearly, for he had by this time not merely seen his aim and defined his purpose, but had also more or less tested his strength, and had found out what he, personally, could and could not undertake.

What he liked and what he hated is well indicated in a letter written to the Countess, when in December 1884 he had left the family in Moscow, and was paying one of his frequent visits to Yásnaya :

Yesterday, when I got out [of the railway carriage] and entered the sledge and drove over the thick, soft snow more than a foot deep (there had been a fresh fall) in that quiet softness, with the enchanting starry winter sky overhead, and with sympathetic Misha [the driver] I experienced a feeling akin to ecstasy, especially after being in the railway carriage, with a cigarette-smoking landed-proprietress in bracelets, a doctor who perorated about the necessity of capital punishment, a horrible drunken woman in a torn cloak lying senseless on

the seat . . . a gentleman with a bottle in his bag, a student with a *pince-nez*, and a conductor who (because I was wearing a sheepskin coat) pushed me in the back: after all that—Orion and Sirius above the Crown Woods, the fluffy, silent snow, a good horse, good air, good Misha, and the good God.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE NEW LIFE

[1885] Visit to Crimea. The Mediator. Short Stories. *Industry and Idleness*. Bóndaref. 'Bread-Labour.' Letter on *Manual Labour*. *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*. The Simple Life at Yásnaya. Haymaking. W. Frey. Vegetarianism. Nietzsche and the 'future angels.' Shoots his last hare. Gives up smoking. Positivism. Neglects his estates. The German steward. Tchóurkin. Feinermann. M. A. Schmidt. The Countess Másha. Manuring. Oven-building with Gay. Vódka. Haymaking and Legends. A Tolstoy Colony. Life in autumn. Morózof's recollections. [1886] Death of Alexéy.

So gradually did the successive phases of Tolstoy's life merge, like dissolving views, into one another, that no attempts to classify them can be more than approximately satisfactory. One is tempted to say that by 1885 he had definitely adopted his new path of life: a life of simple, strenuous work, the mental part of which was specially directed towards removing obstacles to moral progress and clearing up the perplexities that vex the souls of men. Yet the facts refuse to fit neatly into such a generalisation, and we find the strands of his old life weaving themselves into the web of his new endeavour. So, for instance, when Prince L. D. Ouroúsof—who had been the first translator (into French) of *What do I Believe?*—fell ill and was advised to go to the Crimea for a change, but had no friend to accompany him, we find Tolstoy (always glad to

get away from Moscow) offering to be his companion, though this must have seriously interrupted his work, and did not accord with the laborious frugality he aimed at.

A very curious incident occurred on this expedition, which was not otherwise eventful.

It will be remembered that after serving in the Fourth Bastion during the siege of Sevastopol, Tolstoy was, by the Tsar's intervention, removed to a safer place, and sent to Belbék, on the left of the Russian position, where for some time his battery was stationed at the spot now occupied by the English monument. Here the hostile forces were not within range of one another; but one day a small group of horsemen from the camp of the Allies approached the southern bank of the roadstead, and the Russian commander ordered a cannon to be fired to frighten them away. Tolstoy himself pointed that cannon, and fired that shot. He could not see where the ball fell, but the horsemen immediately dispersed.

And now, going over the ground that thirty years before had been occupied by the right wing of the Allies, he found a cannon-ball half buried in the ground. On showing it to a veteran well acquainted with the siege operations, he was assured that the only battery from which it could have reached that spot, was the one he, Tolstoy, had served in; and as he knew that the only cannon-ball fired from that battery was the one he himself had aimed, it appears certain that he had picked up that identical ball.

He had, as we know, been very seldom separated from his wife; and now, travelling in the South, he felt what he has so often expressed, the danger of luxury and leisure, and he hurried home.

Of the events to be recorded in 1885, the one that had the greatest permanent influence was the founding by Tolstoy and his fellow-workers (Tchertkóf, Birukóf and others) of a publishing business called *The Mediator* (in

Russian, *Posrédnik*) perhaps the most successful of all the practical undertakings inspired by Tolstoy.

Up to that time the literature supplied to the peasants had been of a wretched description: consisting on the one hand chiefly of legends and Lives of the Saints—in which whatever there might be of moral worth was smothered in crude superstition—and on the other, of penny-dreadfuls and catchpenny booklets of a quality beneath contempt.

To supply the people with literature embodying the best that has been thought and felt, and—with no aim at pecuniary profit—to supply this in the simplest, briefest and cheapest possible form, was the purpose of the Mediator. Tolstoy felt profoundly that if it is at all permissible for authors to sit comfortably and write books, while consuming food, wearing clothes, and occupying lodgings other men have produced, they must at least see to it that they provide wholesome mental sustenance for those whose toil produces what they consume. For if the bookmen devote themselves to pleasing the privileged classes, and give to the labourers only what for them is mentally indigestible, then they are a burden and a curse to the mass of their fellow-men.

Speaking to Danilevsky, he said:

More than thirty years ago, when some of the present writers, including myself, were beginning to write, the readers in this hundred-millioned empire amounted only to some tens of thousands. Now, after the spread of town and village schools, there are probably some millions, and these millions of Russians able to read, stand before us, like hungry jackdaws with open mouths, and say to us: 'Gentlemen writers of our native land, throw into these mouths literary food worthy of yourselves and of us; write for us, who hunger for living words, and free us from those penny-dreadfuls and the rubbish of the market.' The simple, honest Russian folk deserve that we should respond to their call. I have thought much about this, and to the best of my ability have decided to make an effort in that direction.



The Mediator, which still exists, has done much admirable work, and in so doing has encountered many difficulties. It had not been started long, before the Censors perceived that its simple little booklets and stories meant something, and that in so far as they roused people to think and feel, they were a danger to the existing order. After they had become aware of this, and had detected Tolstoy's influence in the new Publishing Company, every kind of obstacle was placed in its path. How exacting they became, may be illustrated by the fact that when the Mediator published the Sermon on the Mount as a reading lesson in a primer, the book was refused a licence until the injunction to 'take no thought for the morrow' had been suppressed!

A history of the Publishing Company, telling of the men who contributed: Gárshin, Semyónof, Prougávin, Storozhénko, Stráhof, and others; and of the wisdom of the serpent needed to get anything past the Censors, would need a volume to itself. After the Petersburg and Moscow Censors were already on the alert, authorisation for new books and stories was sometimes secured by submitting them to less wide-awake provincial Censors. Tchertkóf was particularly active in this, as well as in obtaining contributions from literary men, and he also advanced funds for the business, but it was Birukóf who chiefly attended to the regular work and managed the firm up to the time of his banishment. After that, the company was carried on by I. I. Gorbounóf, who is still in charge of it, and in whose hands its scope and usefulness have much increased.

At the time of its greatest activity the Mediator sold as many as three to four million booklets a year. When, in hunting for suitable material, Tolstoy came upon stories which, though good, were in his opinion not good enough, he passed these 'mongrels' on to Sitin—a publisher who had a large business, and with whom the Mediator worked

in alliance—inducing him to improve the quality of his publications, and proving to him that he could make as much profit out of good books as out of bad ones.

I believe that even in England (though Morley's Universal Library was started about the time the Mediator came into existence) we are partly indebted to Tolstoy for the spread of the various series of cheap classics that now circulate so largely. When, in 1888, W. T. Stead visited Yásnaya, the two men discussed a 'Penny Universal Classical Library,' and Stead's ventures in that direction were no doubt influenced by that conversation. One of his assistants, Grant Richards, after starting in business on his own account, brought out the World's Classics Series (which subsequently passed into the possession of the Oxford University Press), and the popularity of that series encouraged the publication of the various shilling, nine-penny, and sixpenny collections that have done so much to place good literature within the reach of almost all classes. The influence exerted by a man like Tolstoy, whose mind is set on serving his fellows, is incalculable, and reaches into many distant channels.

At first, short stories by Tolstoy were the mainstay of the Mediator, though some of these were promptly forbidden, and permission to publish others was withdrawn after one or more editions had been allowed. During 1885 he contributed *Two Old Men*, *A Spark Neglected Burns the House*, and *Where Love is, God is*: all of which the reader may find in *Twenty-three Tales*.

It was in 1885, or perhaps even in 1884, that Tolstoy wrote his essay on *Industry and Idleness*, as preface to a little book written by a peasant-sectarian named Bóndaref, who was living in exile in Siberia. Bóndaref was a first-rate ploughman who burned with indignation at the contempt constantly shown to peasants by those rich enough to evade manual labour. He formulated his religion of work with a lucidity and vigour that evoked

Tolstoy's unbounded enthusiasm. Writing in a *Biographical Dictionary of Russian Writers*, in 1897, he went so far as to declare that:

Bóndaref's work will survive all the other works described in this *Dictionary*, and will have more effect on people than all the other books mentioned in it put together. Many have said, and are saying, the same thing. Some consider physical labour necessary for health, others consider it essential for a just economic order; a third group show its necessity for the normal, all-round development of man's capacities; while a fourth group consider it essential for man's moral progress. Thus, for instance, Ruskin . . . in Letter 67 of his *Fors Clavigera*, says: 'It is physically impossible that true religious knowledge, or pure morality, should exist among any classes of a nation who do not work with their hands for their bread.'

Many go round this truth and express it (as Ruskin does) with various reservations; but no one else has done what Bóndaref does in acknowledging bread-labour to be the fundamental religious law of life.

In his essay on *Industry and Idleness* (included in *Essays and Letters*) Tolstoy summarises Bóndaref's contention by saying that:

The misfortune and evil in men's lives come from regarding many empty and harmful regulations as religious duties, while forgetting, and hiding from themselves and others, that chief, primary, undoubted duty announced at the beginning of Holy Scripture: 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.' . . . Not only do people not acknowledge this law, but they acknowledge the very reverse of it. People's belief leads them (from King to beggar) to strive, not to fulfil that law but to avoid it. . . . Of all the definite duties of man, Bóndaref considers that the chief, primary, and most immutable for every man, is to earn his bread with his own hands, understanding by 'bread-labour' all heavy rough work necessary to save man from death by hunger and cold, and by 'bread,' food, drink, clothes, shelter and fuel. . . . All the ills of humanity—except those produced by direct violence—come from hunger, from

want of all kinds, and from being overworked, or on the other hand from excess and idleness and the vices they produce. What more sacred duty can man have than to co-operate in the destruction of his inequality ; this want on the one hand, and this snare of riches on the other ? . . . Life and the blessing of life are not to be found in personal happiness, as people generally suppose, but in the service of God and man. . . . And do not suppose it possible to serve men while you consume what others labour to produce, and fail to produce your own sustenance with your own hands. . . . Whoever you may be, however gifted, however kind to those about you, however circumstanced, can you sit over your tea, your dinner, your political, artistic, scientific, medical, or educational affairs unmoved, while you hear or see at your door hungry, cold, sick, suffering people ? No ! Yet they are always there, if not at the door, then ten yards or ten miles away. They are there, and you know it ! And you cannot be at peace, cannot have any pleasure which is not poisoned by that knowledge !

Bóndaref, be it remarked in passing, estimates that a competent worker can perform ' bread-labour ' sufficient for his own support by working forty days a year.

Tolstoy's literary output in 1885 ran nearly all in that same direction. He wrote an essay-letter to a Frenchman, on *Manual Labour* ; and continued to work at *What Then Must We Do ?* He also made a (somewhat free) translation from the Greek, of the moral precepts forming the first part of *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, the famous document which had been brought to light by Bishop Bryennios, in 1883.

He also devoted himself vigorously to field-work, and, much to the perturbation of the Countess, disciples began to gather round him.

By contrasting the accounts given by various eye-witnesses, we can get a very good idea of what life at Yásnaya was like during this and the subsequent summers.

Anna Seuron tells us :

When making tea the Count would almost count each leaf,

yet he was losing thousands by bad management of his estates. For a time he quite ceased to take any care of his personal appearance, and was absurdly dirty and untidy. He, who had always worn very fine socks, suddenly demanded strips of linen, and began to wrap his legs in them as peasants do. . . .

One day he announced that though lice, considered as insects, are dirty, yet a poor man should not be considered dirty for being lousy. Being poor he is a natural prey to lice. To be clean requires means; it is a luxury! . . .

It was a most amazing time, and it is quite comprehensible that people who heard reports of his eccentricities should have considered him simply mad.

But he was never saner than at that period. He was testing, internally and externally, just how much he could endure, and how hard it is to do without this or that thing. Of course, only those nearest to him could know this.

This again is one of her thumbnail sketches;

Haymaking! What a picture! Counts, Princes, teachers, and all sorts of blue-blooded people tried to work in competition with the peasants. Scythes hacked awkwardly, mowing the sappy grass. Every one strove to outdo the others. As far as eye could reach, workers were seen everywhere. All the peasants were there, and so was the Countess in a Russian dress; children and governesses—we all helped to turn the hay. The hunting dogs lay around, and a specially hot sun shone on the smiling meadow. In the distance, on one hill was seen the village, and on another, the Count's house.

And there he stands, that peasant Count, in a Russian shirt and trousers, his legs wide apart, mowing; and looking at him, I see that he is quite engrossed in it. He is listening to the sound of the scythes, and enjoying himself. . . .

At that time a very original man arrived from America to see the Count. He called himself Frey; but in spite of his name he was a Russian. He was about fifty, but his appearance was blooming and youthful; he was a vegetarian, and for ten years had not even used any salt.

The Countess was beside herself with vexation, for even her daughters came under his influence and ceased to eat meat,

and began to grow pale. However, before the year was over, the fit passed and the vegetarians ate meat with the rest of us.

I can only testify that a few years later, when I made their acquaintance, the Countess Mary was a vegetarian, and her elder sister, the Countess Tatiána, was very nearly so. Tolstoy, in spite of the digestive troubles from which he has suffered ever since the Crimean campaign, and despite his wife's opposition, has remained a vegetarian to the present day. Anna Seuron's view is that:

The Count took up these manias only in the spirit of penitence, to subdue his flesh and elevate and enlighten his spirit. There was even a time when he really seemed to wither up and become thin. He tormented himself, and wrote with his heart's blood. . . .

Any one who in the 'eighties noticed how the Count suddenly began to get thin, and how his narrow leather belt was continually being tightened a hole or two, could easily have convinced himself that this too was one of the paths to salvation. . . .

Yet at the same time he was good-natured and often merry. He would play croquet, run races with his sons, play the piano, and of an evening drew devils on scraps of paper. He laughed at things that seemed serious to other people, sewed new boots and mended old ones, rejoiced in his frugal economies, and played with the little children: in a word, he was a simple, kindly, good family man, who did not know how to count beyond three, and would never stir up the mud in any stream.

It happened at times that he threw off from himself Leo Tolstoy the writer, the Count, the shoemaker, the aristocrat and the father of a family, and became simply himself—for he, like an onion, possesses the capacity to throw off one skin after another. The days on which these metamorphoses occurred were of course not marked in the calendar, and it is better so, or one would get still more completely confused. On such days the Count changed completely, and was even sceptical about his family tree.

The real name of the remarkable man mentioned by Anna Seuron, and who passed as William Frey, was V. K. Heins. He was Russian by birth. Besides serving in the Finnish Regiment, he had passed through two Military Academies: the Artillery and the General Staff. From boyhood he had shown extraordinary ability. He was an excellent mathematician, and possessed wide scientific knowledge. Moved by moral impulses, he abandoned the brilliant career opening before him, and in 1868 emigrated to the United States, where he founded an agricultural-communal Colony, which fell to pieces a few years later, as such things generally do. He then betook himself to the Kansas Colony founded by N. Tchaykóvsky, and there reluctantly consented to exchange manual labour for educational work, and proved to be an admirable science lecturer. Tchaykóvsky's Colony came to grief in its turn, as already narrated, and after working in the United States as a common labourer, Frey migrated to England.

Having gone to America a Communist-Socialist, he returned a Positivist-Comtist of the strictest type.

In 1885 he returned to Russia. From the preface to a series of his Letters to Tolstoy we learn how he came to seek the latter's acquaintance, and how much the two found they had in common, despite a sharp divergence in their views on religion. In quite the Tolstoyan spirit, Frey says:

The more I saw of the readiness of Russians to accept, for the guidance of their life, a new religion and morality, the more tormenting to me was the thought of how much energy and life is spent, at times almost uselessly, in struggles against the Government, when self-sacrifice and altruism are so much needed for another struggle (in my opinion, a more real one) in which one has to fight evil not with its own weapons, but to meet its weapons with a bold and invincible determination to devote oneself to the service of humanity at all costs, and in spite of all injunctions.

Of himself and Tolstoy, he says :

Working, apparently in different circumstances and under different banners, we have both come to the conviction that religion is the sole key to the solution of the questions of life, for the individual and for society. We have both arrived at the doctrine of altruism, and relying neither on legendary bogeys nor on any promise of eternal life, we have found the solution of our doubts, in the life of others. Even in small ethical details we have much in common, and can therefore understand one another. . . .

Last summer I went to Russia, and only there heard for the first time of Tolstoy's activity, of his immense influence on the live part of Russian society, and of his manuscripts circulating by thousands of copies. Till then I had known nothing of all that. From Tolstoy's treatises I was not able clearly to grasp his world-conception, but in any case I could not ignore such a force. I wrote him (a) a profession of my religion, in order to deduce therefrom (b) my criticism of his teaching. On receiving my letter, Tolstoy at once wrote asking me to come to see him. . . . I hastened to avail myself of his invitation, and I spent five unforgettable days with him (7 to 12 October 1885).

One of the results of Frey's visit to Yásnaya was that Tolstoy became a vegetarian. Feinermann, who was then at Yásnaya, tells us :

It was from Frey that Leo Nikoláyevitch first heard Vegetarianism preached, and in him he first saw a man who had consciously abjured all slaughter.

'How good that is! How good! . . .' said Leo Nikoláyevitch, enraptured. 'But can vegetable food suffice?'

'Even wheat grains alone suffice,' answered Frey. 'One only need dry them and use them as food.'

'What? Not even ground?' said Leo Nikoláyevitch, aghast.

'Has man any better mill than his own mouth?' answered Frey, and evoked a storm of enthusiasm by his reply.

Leo Nikoláyevitch's delight was unbounded. He embraced



Frey, kissed him, and in all ways expressed his good-will towards him.

‘I mention cereals,’ continued Frey, ‘because at present they seem easier to get. But gramineous food obtained from the fields is not really the most natural to man. Another and a nobler kind of food is naturally his, to obtain which he need not cut or pluck stalks—which is a slaughter of plant-life. Fortunately man’s very structure teaches him to eat a wonderful food, retaining the odours of the virgin gardens of Paradise. . . . Yes! Both the structure of our teeth and the length of our intestines incontrovertibly prove that man is not a beast of prey, adapted to rend and swallow other animals. He has not the sharp-pointed, widely-separate teeth of the beasts of prey, and the length of his intestines is far greater than theirs. Those two circumstances prove, better than any tractates, that it is abnormal for man to feed on flesh-meat.

‘It is also clear that man is not an herbivorous animal. His intestines are too short for that: they would have to be twice as long, nor are his teeth as broad as those of the herbivora. Man belongs to a category of animals for whom another food is natural—fruits and nuts. He is not a flesh-eating or a grass-eating, but a fruit-eating animal. And of all the fruits, the best are nuts. Take for instance the monkeys in the forests. They feed on nuts, and how flexible, agile and strong they are! With a stroke of his arm a gorilla has been known to smash a lion’s skull, and his teeth have flattened the barrel of a gun.

‘In vain the flesh-eaters argue that the use of meat is a beneficent process for the perfecting of undeveloped creatures, because, when the flesh of an animal is assimilated by the human organism, it is converted into bright thoughts, inspired feelings, and noble actions. What, they ask, is there immoral in it? On the contrary, the cattle should be grateful to us for eating them!

‘It is exactly like Nietzsche, with his theory of the Superman. He says that the material welfare of the disinherited masses must be sacrificed for the lofty purpose of developing a new type. Very likely the lower mass of humanity suffers in its fields, shafts, mines, factories and railways, but the

material blessings it produces are mysteriously converted into a new and marvellous type of civilised man. Its sufferings are fully compensated for in the general economy of Nature; and the squalor of capitalism is redeemed by the superiority of the Superman!

'I listen to you, and to your excellent comparison,' remarked Tolstoy, 'and recall a legend a monk in Optin Monastery told me when I went there to pray:

"God at first created the spiritual world, the realms of angels. They sang praises to the Lord and contemplated His excellence. But then the most beloved of the angels, seized by pride and envy, incited a crowd of the heavenly host to rebel against God, Who hurled him, with all his adherents, into the gloom of the abyss.

"The fallen angels became evil spirits, and their leader was called Satan.

"Then the angels who remained in heaven, submissive to God, besought Him, saying:

"Woe, woe to us! Thou hast deprived us of our comrade, and our number will not be renewed. . . ."

"But the Lord was angry with them, and said:

"O ye of little faith! Ye know not My power! Therefore of the most miserable creatures on the earth, I will now make beings equal to yourselves, and will renew your number!"

"And in His anger, God created man.

"People live oppressed by heavy toil, and live passionately in lusts and sufferings, but it is not in vain; for among them exist holy spots, the monasteries, and thither fly the gifts and the sons of suffering humanity; and there, by God's will, from that most wretched creature, man, angel-like beings are formed, to replace those who fell from heaven." . . .

'And, outside the wall of the cell, I heard the hiss of a large two-handed saw, shh! . . . shh! . . . It was the noise made by hired workmen cutting planks for the houses of the "future angels"!'

'Yes, my friend; deception reigns powerfully in our life, and you are quite right. Thanks, thanks for your wise and honest words! I will certainly follow your example and abandon flesh-meat.'

And really from that time Leo Nikoláyevitch ate nothing that was slaughtered, and at one time went so far as to live on oatmeal porridge.

One day, soon after his conversion to Vegetarianism, Tolstoy called on his friend I. I. Raévsky, at a hotel in Toúla. Raévsky was having dinner. Tolstoy began to say that one should not eat meat or gluttonise, and that man's proper food is bread and water. The pudding was brought in, and Tolstoy, still talking, drew the dish towards himself to take some. 'Eh! No! . . .' protested Raévsky humorously, 'that's also gluttony!' and Tolstoy pushed back the dish and expressed his penitence.

Anna Seuron tells us :

It was at this time that he renounced hunting and shooting ; and of his difficulty in so doing and the strength of the feeling that at times drew him to such sport, let the following incident testify. Once, after writing for many hours, he came out into the hall and threw his gun over his shoulder, but could not find his hat. As the sun was baking-hot, he seized the first head-gear that came to hand, and vanished like lightning from the house. Towards evening he returned, immersed in thought, his bare head hanging down, and he crept stealthily into the house, dragging behind him a slaughtered hare ; and hanging from his belt was his eldest daughter's gigantic turkey-red hat, which in his ardour he had seized on going out.

That was the last hare he killed, and his gun would have been rusting till to-day, had it not been for his sons who, though they respect their father's example, avoid following it. . . . He never forbade them to shoot or hunt, but only asked them not to be cruel to the game, and never wished to see what they had shot. . . .

Again days of trial arrived. The Count seemed possessed by a fever of renunciation. Now had come the turn of tobacco. Oh, unfortunate man ! How hard it was to part from tobacco, and from the cigarettes he used to smoke so awkwardly yet with such enjoyment ! 'Smoking is harmful,' announced the

Count, one morning; 'it is a luxury! Instead of tobacco, barley might be grown to feed the famished.' And his horn cigar-holder was set aside on the shelf, where it lay beside the works of Rousseau, Stendhal, Bernardin de Saint Pierre, etc.

The Count gained a new, extremely difficult victory over himself. He suffered unendurable torment, positively not knowing what to do with himself. He would pick up a cigarette-end here and there, like a schoolboy, to have but a single whiff; or dilating his nostrils, he would eagerly inhale the smoke when others smoked in his presence. And after a while, despite his convictions, he again yielded to his inclination; for smoking really soothed his nerves, and those who suppose the Count to be an ascetic in the full sense of the word, are much mistaken. He has had, and still has, times when he is capable of any amount of self-denial; but with his physique and his senses, the Count can never be a Saint.

Difficult as the struggle may have been, Tolstoy finally and completely overcame his craving for tobacco.

Frey went south after his visit to Yásnaya; and when he returned, in December, found Tolstoy in Moscow finishing *What Then Must We Do?*—in the 29th chapter of which he summarises various religious and philosophic systems which, in his opinion, serve to palliate customary and established wrongs, and to divert attention from the changes that ought to be made in our way of living.

Among such systems Tolstoy includes the Evangelical teaching of the Fall and Redemption, which he says is employed to supplant Christ's moral indictment of social wrongs; and the Hegelian system, with its principle that 'all that exists is reasonable.'

Chapter 30 is devoted to a destructive criticism of Positivism, which he treats as being a similarly apologetic system. This Tolstoy read to Frey; for as one of Frey's main contentions was the necessity of subordinating scientific activity to religious-moral principles, Tolstoy hoped that he would agree that Comte's scientific system

usurps the place of religion, and abolishes the control that should be exercised by moral principles.

Frey accepted Chapter 29—the one in which religious and scientific systems, diverting man's attention from moral guidance to intellectual abstractions, are submitted to criticism; but on hearing Chapter 30, which treats Auguste Comte as the author of a creed similarly justifying the errors of the crowd, he revolted. After passing the night in Tolstoy's study, he rose early, and sitting at Tolstoy's writing-table, indited an appeal to him to destroy Chapter 30, modify Chapter 29, and not to class Positivism among the ruling, justificatory, scientific theories, nor name Comte among the founders of such systems.

Tolstoy as usual stood to his guns. He always continued to feel and to express the kindest sentiments towards Frey, as a man who shaped his life in accord with his beliefs; but there was no further personal intercourse between the two, and in February 1886 Frey returned to England, where, three years later, he died.

In the third letter to Tolstoy, Frey shows that with him, too, esteem prevailed over intellectual differences. He says:

We have understood one another; we both strive towards the same end, and both work for reforms from within, and against reforms forcibly engrafted from without. Our mental union, identity of outlook on life, and even our spiritual friendship, all apparently show that only one way is left: namely for each of us, after separating, to continue his work with yet more spirit, and more faith in the speedy triumph of our ideas; for each of us sees in the other an ally for the holy cause of moral renovation, on which all hopes for a better future are built.

He could not, however, refrain from one more effort to convert Tolstoy; and to this end drew up a number of theses for his consideration, to which Tolstoy wrote replies,

rejecting nearly all of them. Almost the only exception was thesis No. 18, which Frey worded thus :

Your new Christianity cannot be strictly separated from the old ; and in consequence of mixing the two, you—an opponent of intolerance and violence—involuntarily play into the hands of the oppressors.

In the margin Tolstoy noted : ‘That is true.’

In No. 19 Frey continued :

And if you are saying something quite different from what was said by former and by contemporary preachers of Christianity, you should, to avoid confusion, give your teaching a different and more suitable name, and should influence the hearts of the people by other more attractive figures—since the name and figure of Christ now serve to defend existing evil and violence.

Tolstoy replied :

I cannot do so, for all I know comes from Christ, and as I am still continually learning from him, I think I shall learn yet more in the future.

As already mentioned, Tolstoy’s absorption in his new ideas, the discussions they aroused, and the literary work by which he sought to spread his views, militated against the efficient management of his estates, which for several years were greatly neglected. Anna Seuron tells us :

That winter the Count quite neglected his fine estate in Samára. It was too far off, there was at that time no direct communication by railway, and moreover from time to time some famished teacher would turn up who would persuade the Count that he (the teacher) was well acquainted with agricultural affairs. If he also professed agreement with the Count’s ideas, he was sure to secure a place in Samára. . . . One way and another, matters there took an exceedingly bad turn. . . . Hundreds of thousands of roubles were lost, but the estate ultimately proved to be a veritable gold-mine, and yielded a revenue in spite of everything. . . .

In those days the Count was enough to drive any observer crazy. He behaved with complete unrestraint, like some boa-constrictor who swallows a bird and calmly digests it. Like a ruminant he swallowed and threw up, and re-swallowed, his ideas; and those around him—especially those who came in his way—suffered from this cud-chewing process.

In a sphere in which things commonly considered important seemed of no account, and things hardly thought of by the 'cultured crowd' were the all-important subjects of attention, the strangest events happened without attracting notice.

Tchoúrkin, the famous robber and murderer who had killed fifteen people, wrote twice to Tolstoy; and on one occasion, after one of his three escapes from Siberia, frightened Anna Seuron on her way to bathe in the river that runs at one end of the Yásnaya estate, about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the house. Tolstoy took these letters quite as a matter of course, and even forgot that Tchoúrkin had ever written to him.

The visitors at Yásnaya naturally tended to divide themselves more or less sharply into two camps: those who adhered to Tolstoy, and favoured manual labour and a peasant-like life, and those who were on the side of the Countess and wished things to go on as heretofore. The two sets were sometimes called the 'dark' and the 'white.'

One of the 'dark' who arrived about this time was a well-built young Jew named Feinermann, some nineteen years old, of whom Anna Seuron tells us:

One day he appeared upon the scene—no one knew why or wherefore. He announced that he wished to work. The Count, who was pleased by the way he talked, directed him to the village, and the young man stayed there some weeks and conducted himself admirably, helping everywhere with the roughest work, and attending the sick in the peasants' huts. There was typhus at that time in the village. Feinermann was quite the hero of the day; but though the children,

nephews, and all the young folk, including my own son, tried to set him on a pedestal, the whole affair seemed to me doubtful and ridiculous. The Countess looked at things with a practical eye, and tried at any rate to make use of the young man. He said he knew something of tailoring; so she bought some roubles' worth of linen, and set him to work to make the Count a pair of trousers. But alas! what were they like? Whichever way you turned them, they were no use at all. Feinermann at once sank in the Countess's eyes.

But he was not abashed by his failure. . . . He set to at field-work; and later on, when things were quieter, took to spiritual occupations. The Count often asked him to tea, and he really was a pleasant, educated man with good manners. One fine day he announced that he wished to enter the Orthodox Greek Church, and set off to see the priest. . . .

This matter went forward in due course, without any fuss. Feinermann was a quiet fellow, and an adroit one. I am convinced that the Count had nothing to do with his conversion, and merely let things take their course. The baptism took place, but no members of the Count's family were present; and becoming a Christian only improved Feinermann's position in so far as it gave him occasion to confess that he had a wife, and to ask permission for her to join him. . . .

Feinermann's reason, the Countess says, for becoming a member of the Orthodox Church was to qualify himself for the position of village schoolmaster at Yásnaya. The Countess, however, considering that he had a bad influence and that the peasants disliked him, made such representations to the authorities as ensured his having to leave the place.

Anna Seuron says :

Then, one fine day, Feinermann was summoned to serve in the army . . . and soon he was no longer remembered. He disappeared from our horizon as rapidly as he had appeared on it. Jew or Christian, it was all the same to the Count. How could one find strength to follow up all those who came for a short time, hoping to find salvation in his teaching? It would



seem that the maxim, 'Each for himself, and God for all,' applied here also.

Having thus made Feinermann's acquaintance, let us hear what he has to say of Yásnaya Polyána in 1885. The lady, Márya Alexándrovna Schmidt, mentioned in the following account, had been a *dame de classe* at the St. Nicholas Institute for girls in Petersburg, but having come under Tolstoy's influence wished to simplify her life.

Másha, Tolstoy's favourite daughter, ran in: a light and slim maiden with a kerchief on her head arranged like a young peasant woman's, and wearing a peasant-costume of hand-spun material and an apron. Gently swaying her body, she said rapidly:

'Márya Alexándrovna, do you want to see how they lay the sheaves in the barn? Come along!'

And not waiting for a reply, she drew Márya Alexándrovna away with her; but her ringing laughter could still be heard in the distance as she ran along, kissing and clinging to Márya Alexándrovna. 'Ha! ha! ha! my little *dame de classe*!'

The next day we met in the Widow Anísyá's yard. She had no one to till her strip of land, so Leo Nikoláyevitch undertook to manure and plough it. We came into the yard with a cart and forks, and began to fork up the yellow-brown manure, compressed into broad, damp layers that had accumulated from one cow during the winter. Márya Alexándrovna also helped, smoothing the heaps with a fork.

'Your baptism of fire!' chaffed Leo Nikoláyevitch. 'Don't be abashed that this is your first work! In all agricultural labour this comes first, and one must begin with it.'

'But I am so pleased . . . what do you mean?' and her thin brown cheeks flushed red.

And Másha, who was also there, and who, with a serious air, was all the time carrying bundles of straw from the stack and spreading it where the ground was cleared, remarked didactically:

'I think it is better to work than to make wise speeches!' and was off for another bundle of straw.

In the evening we all met again in Leo Nikoláyevitch's large dining-room; and although we had changed our clothes, the 'ladies' (as they called the Countess, her sister, T. A. Kouzminsky, and the governess) made faces, and brought in plates from which thin streams of perfumed smoke rose from burning pastilles and scented herbs.

'Smoking-out the unclean spirit with incense!' laughed Leo Nikoláyevitch. 'You would do better to come and work with us: then there would be no need of this smoking-out!'

This scene produced a very strong impression on Márya Alexándrovna. 'How painful!' she afterwards said to me, 'and how painful it must be for him! Who can realise the oppressiveness of this tormenting duality better than he himself?'

Márya Alexándrovna paused, and continued:

'He says it is his "cross." I bow down, and confess that I should not have the strength to bear such a cross.'

'The enemies of a man are those of his own household,' said I.

'Yes, yes, exactly!' continued she. 'Másha said, "Do you know what Papa hopes for? That he will bring us all round to a new life, and that we shall all believe as he does." Our dear, precious Leo Nikoláyevitch! What a terrible task he is undertaking! He will not accomplish it. I foresee the worst: he will not only never see his family living a new life, but will not even have a group of friends living around or near him. You are now the only one living here; and I have heard that even you have much to put up with. They are afraid of your influence on the children, the family, the servants and the peasants. And if even a small community of us collected, the first words of persecution would come from the rooms from which came those pastilles and sweet herbs. Yes. . . .'

Leo Nikoláyevitch came up and, hearing what the conversation was about, said:

'It is my sin, there's no denying it. In my heart I have many a time decided to go away and settle over there, at the corner of the forest—you know, where the Vorónka River twists back towards the Zásėka. There was an apiary there once, and the beekeeper's hut is still standing. I could live

and work and write there. I have felt drawn, and even now feel irresistibly drawn thither; but I have said to myself, "That would be anchoritism: it would be like standing on a pillar." And I want to live and serve God and work in His fields with the equipment and the encumbrances it has pleased Him to bestow on me. I have weighed and sounded my soul in all sincerity, and always when I imagine myself in my present circumstances of oppression, opposition and ridicule, subduing my pride and my ambitious desire to show men an example, I feel nearer to Him Who is guiding my life, and am conscious of His hand. But as soon as I imagine myself there, in a state of freedom, living a model life in peace, I lose the sense of closeness to Him, His hand no longer seems near me, and a horror of coldness and forsakenness seizes me, and I say to myself, "No, I will remain where I am."

And Márya Alexándrovna, who had been planning to go away, also remained. A strong friendship grew up between her and Másha. They worked together in the field, hay-making; did housework for the peasants, milking their cows, spinning, cooking, and looking after the children.

A neighbour of that Anísya from whose yard we carted the manure, happened to fall ill. The illness lasted some time, and at last proved to be typhus. And Márya Alexándrovna watched beside him for weeks, at the same time helping his wife, the kindly, tall, but delicate old Dómna.

'And where was so fine a soul born, O Lord!' Dómna used to say, touching the hem of Márya Alexándrovna's garment. 'Why do you take such a burden on yourself? You, who might eat and drink in plenty, and live like the gentlefolk! . . . You are wasting your health here on us, burning like a taper set before a Saint's icon. . . .'

The following is Anna Seuron's account of the foregoing incident:

One day he came to lunch straight from manuring a field. At that time several amateurs of that pleasant occupation had assembled at Yásnaya Polyána. All the windows and doors were opened wide, or one would have had simply to run away! The Count smiled and looked merrily round, thoroughly pleased

to smell of manure ; and it seemed that he was so completely convinced that he was doing something very good, that I burst out laughing. . . .

Arbouzof tells us that in field-work Tolstoy kept pace with the peasants, and that :

Leo Nikoláyevitch received remuneration for his work, for he ploughed and mowed not as an amateur, but seriously. He worked, like a peasant, *íspolou* [that is, 'half-and-half': an arrangement under which a peasant does field-work for half the crop he raises on some one's land]. When he had earned five stacks, the Count would cart away three for himself, and give two of the five to a poor widow.

When N. N. Gay stayed at Yásnaya, he and Tolstoy worked for three months at bricklaying, and together built a hut and outbuildings for the Widow Anísya Kapýlova.

The Count and N. N. Gay laid the bricks, while the Countesses Tatiána and Márya plaited straw for the roof. But there was a difficulty about making the brick-oven. I cannot tell you how they laughed over it !

Leo Nikoláyevitch sat inside, and N. N. Gay from outside handed him in the materials. For a long time nothing came of it ; but at last they managed to get the oven built.

Much has been written about that hut, but it was not a great success. The clay was not properly wetted, and before long the building became crooked and began to fall to pieces. The surprising thing however is, not that Tolstoy should have shown himself inexpert at house-building, but that he could do so many different things, and yet do several of them so well. Arbouzof adds :

'Later on, Leo Nikoláyevitch got angry with that same Anísya Kapýlova, and ceased to help her.'

'Why ?'

'Because she began secretly to trade in vódka, and to make the peasants drunk. Leo Nikoláyevitch advised her to stop that business, but she did not obey him.'

'And is vódka still sold in Yásnaya ?' asked the recorder of Arbouzof's remarks.

'No; now that poison can't be got for any money, because we love our Count very much and respect him; and Leo Nikolájevitch hates vódka and tobacco more than anything else. He says: "The man who does not smoke, saves ten years of his life; and the man who does not drink, saves twenty."'

'And does he drink himself?'

'He used to drink, but only a little. When he returned from shooting, for instance, he would have a small liqueur and a tumbler of light wine, half-and-half with water. But now he does not drink anything at all but water and *kvás*' [a non-alcoholic beverage].

In the early 'eighties I wished to leave, because there was no getting on with the housekeeper and the nurse; but Leo Nikolájevitch would not let me go.

'Don't you listen,' said he, 'to those old maids, because when they settled down to old-maidishness they became absolute idiots!'

And so I stayed on.

Let Feinermann continue the story of Tolstoy's activities:

We were getting in a second crop of hay on the meadow near the garden. In the forenoon we shook it and raked it together, and towards evening we began gathering it into *kopná* [large cocks carefully built up to stand like stacks].

Leo Nikolájevitch, wielding a pitchfork, stood in the middle, while we brought heaps of fresh, sweet hay, rich with flowers and clover that had ripened a second time that summer, and this—with an easy movement from his waist—he laid round him in the shape of a well that quickly grew upwards.

When he had completed the circle and trodden down the last lot, he would stand erect, waiting in triumph for those who carried the hay:

'I am ahead of you! What are you about?'

Márya Alexándrovna worked harder than any one, and would rush along, carefully pressing a large heap to her bosom with the rake, like a mother carrying a baby across a stream.

Másha dragged along after her, dropping half the hay on the way; and behind her another girl, with a pathetic, anxious

look, the meek, dreamy Ólga, tripped along, the handle of her rake pressing hard on her little shoulder as she bent beneath her load. . . .

When he had made a *kopná*, Leo Nikoláyevitch would jump to the ground, and comb down and trim its sides and top with his rake. The sun was nearly setting, and we hurried to complete the last cock.

'Let's hurry up!' Leo Nikoláyevitch kept encouraging us. "When sun has set, man cannot work." That's what the old folk say!

There was only a little left, and the last cock was a very small one with a pointed top.

Having trimmed its sides, Leo Nikoláyevitch threw the trimmings on the top, and leaning his elbows on the cock, heaved a sigh of relief:

'We have just managed to keep pace with the sun! See there! . . . Its last edge touches the railway, and the long trail from the engine's wicked funnel tries to cover even that last rosy edge. I think I see some one standing beside the sun and threatening that wicked funnel and the whole of our blasphemous life.'

We gathered round Leo Nikoláyevitch, and shaking off the stalks and tendrils that clung to our clothes, placed ourselves also beside the rick. It seemed so much our own! Másha stood on Leo Nikoláyevitch's left side; Márya Alexándrovna on his right. Leo Nikoláyevitch thrust his arm into his leather belt, forming a half-circle with his arm, and through this semi-circle I saw Márya Alexándrovna's face, full of tenderness, like that of a Saint; and my eyes involuntarily looked for a halo around it.

Ólga placed herself behind Másha, and with an effort, stretching her neck so as to see Leo Nikoláyevitch's face, asked timidly, as though in reply to his last thought:

'But could there be life without evil? Could man exist if there were no evil?'

'A nice thought, Ólga Nikoláyevna,' Leo Nikoláyevitch said with animation; 'but it is not correct! Man comes of good, not of evil. A few days ago I was looking through a collection of ancient legends, and read with delight some that dealt just

with that point. There are thoughts of striking depth expressed with extraordinary simplicity and artlessness in those legends. Here, for instance, is one which of course I shall have to tell in my own way.' And he began :

'The Lord thought of a new creature, a marvellous combination of heaven and earth.

"Do not create him!" said the Angel of Truth sternly. "He will quickly defile Thy temple, and will glorify fraud on earth ; temptations will hold sway everywhere."

"Do not create him!" prayed the Angel of Justice. "He will be cruel, hurting every one and loving only himself. He will be deaf to the sufferings of others, and the weeping of the oppressed will not reach his heart."

"He will steep the earth in blood," added the Angel of Peace, "and murder will become his occupation. Terrors of devastation will seize the land, and fear of violent death will enter every soul."

'And the countenance of the All-Upholder became overcast. The marvellous combination of heaven and earth seemed mean and evil to the Ruler, and in His eternal fore-will a decision was ripening—"Not to be. . . ."

'But now, before the Throne of the Life-Giver, appeared His youngest, best-beloved child, Mercy. She embraced the knees of the Father and begged :

"Create him! When all Thy servants leave him, I will find him, help him, and change even his shortcomings into good. I will guard him, that he should not stray from the path of truth. I will draw his heart to sympathy, and will teach him to show mercy to the weakest!"

'And the face of the All-Upholder became radiant. The marvellous combination of heaven and earth came into being, and took His form and His likeness.

"Live!" breathed on him the All-Upholder, "and know thou art the child of Mercy."

'That is how man was created; yet you say he is the outcome of evil,' and Leo Nikoláyevitch looked at Ólga with a kindly, half-reproachful smile.

‘A beautiful legend!’ said she, in a tone of delight, and smiled with confusion.

Here Márya Alexándrovna joined in the conversation. Her face vanished from the semicircle, and she came and stood by Ólga’s side as if to show that she was on her side in the discussion.

‘But where does it all come to us from?—All these passions and agitations that burden the soul?—if we are all goodness mercy, holiness. . . . Where does sin come from?’

Leo Nikoláyevitch moved away from the *kopná*, took his pitchfork over his shoulder, and walked on with decided steps.

‘Come along! and I will tell you all about it as we go.’

And we went.

‘Hear how the whole thing happened. . . .

‘There was a Lord who had a garden with splendid fruit, and he placed two watchmen at the gates of his garden: on the right a blind one, and on the left a lame one.

“‘They will not let any one in, and will themselves not eat any fruit,” thought the Lord, and he went into his palace reassured. But when midnight came and the lights began to shine in the heavens and the moon rose up, the beauty of the fruit shone very temptingly, and the lame man said to the blind one:

“‘How beautiful the fruit is in the orchard!’”

“‘Bring some, and let us eat,” said the blind man.

“‘How can I?’” answered the lame man with a sigh. . . .

“Let me get on your shoulders, and carry me to the tree. Then I will pluck the fruit, and we will eat.”

‘And the blind man did as the lame man told him, and they plucked and ate the fruit.

‘In the morning came the Lord. The watchmen were in their places, one on the right and the other on the left of the gate, but the fruit had been stolen.

“‘Confess!’” said the Lord. “‘You have let in a thief!’”

“‘We swear, there has been no thief, Lord,” answered the watchmen with one voice.

“‘Well, then one of you has done it. Confess! . . .”

“‘You see my infirmity, Lord,” said the lame man. “‘I cannot walk two steps even on smooth ground.”



"You see my blindness, Lord," said the blind man, pointing to his sunken eyes; "I do not even know the way."

'But the Lord put the lame man on the shoulders of the blind man, and said, "This is how you did it!"

'So it is with man. The dead body lies pure and submissive, and shining with peace and calm.

"Can I sin?" it says. "I am blind, and can see no temptations, and do not even know the way to them."

"And how can I sin?" says the soul. "Since the moment I left Thee, I fly in air like a pure bird."

"Then this is what you did," says the Lord, and takes the soul and unites it with the body, and leads it to the Tree of Life with its beautiful fruit, and the life of man begins. In this combination lies all the mystery, all the horror, all the temptation, and also all the overpowering joy of life.'

The afterglow of sunset was beginning to pale, and dark-purple, dome-shaped clouds, towering one above another, floated up and stretched out eastward, like gigantic stripes.

'Look, what a wrathful spectacle is enacted in the heavens! Everything is filled with the hope of dawn. . . . Beautiful! . . . But before I finish, just one more legend on the same theme,' said Leo Nikoláyevitch, as we approached the house. 'I am in a legendary mood this evening:

'A King's daughter is betrothed to a rich man. He grudges nothing to delight his betrothed, and supplies her with every kind of pleasure. He builds her marble palaces with golden ornaments, prepares rich feasts in her honour, lavishes pearls and precious stones upon her. . . . But his betrothed remains cold and indifferent, and has no inclination for feasts or presents. Why? Because she is a King's daughter.

'So it is with the soul. Earth spreads all its treasures before her, and scatters her path with carnal pleasures. But the soul remains cold, and does not incline her heart to such delights. Why? Because she is God's daughter!'

We parted in deep thought. The meaning of the legends,

the tone in which they were told, and the whole atmosphere of labour and faith, imprinted themselves indelibly on the mind, as something unusually joyful and elevating.

Márya Alexándrovna did not long remain at Yásnaya Polyána after that.

A Tolstoy Colony had been started in another part of Russia, and she joined it.

Hard times began for her. Her letters spoke of struggles with the hardships of the new life. The land bought for the Colony was covered with spiky thistles, and these had to be pulled up by hand. The Colonists' hands were always bleeding, the work was very exhausting, and above all, there were no prospects before them, no hope of soon getting the land cleared.

Besides Márya Alexándrovna, there were several other 'searching souls' in the Community, and they were all crushed by the incredible difficulty of their immense labour, which became real torture. . . . Márya Alexándrovna bore everything uncomplainingly and with wonderful fortitude. 'However bad it may be here, still the life of ladies and gentlemen is worse!'

Leo Nikoláyevitch wrote letters of encouragement, and when these were received, it was a holiday for the whole Colony.

Later on, when the Colony fell to pieces, Márya Alexándrovna and her friend, also a teacher formerly, settled on a desert part of the Crimean shore and worked like two hermits from morn till late at night, in their little kitchen and garden.

'Simpletons!' they called them in the neighbourhood. 'Saints,' was Leo Nikoláyevitch's name for them.

Eventually Márya Alexándrovna settled in a village a few miles from Yásnaya, and has remained there to the present time, keeping cows and cultivating a bit of land lent her by Tolstoy's eldest daughter, and living almost as barely as a peasant-woman.

Of Márya Alexándrovna's sincerity, industry, and devotion to Tolstoy and his doctrines, there is no possible doubt. The only question is whether on the whole, by

standing aside from educational work, separating herself from her own class, and working at hard manual labour, she has really rendered better service to mankind than she could have done in ways less unconventional. Working alone, she has not been able to maintain herself by agricultural work without help; whereas a gentle, educated, trustworthy woman of good will, such as she, working in co-operation with others as one small wheel in the complex mechanism of society, would be worth much more than the bare cost of her keep, and I do not think the value of her example and influence would be less under those circumstances.

In the autumn, when field-work was over, Gay would come to Yásnaya; and when the Countess had moved to Moscow with her sons, Tolstoy and his daughters would remain there for a while with him.

Tolstoy would then devote himself to literary work, in which Gay helped him. When the post arrived of an evening, they would all deal with it together, Tolstoy sorting out the letters into (1) those he would have to answer; (2) those his daughters could answer; and (3) those that could go unanswered.

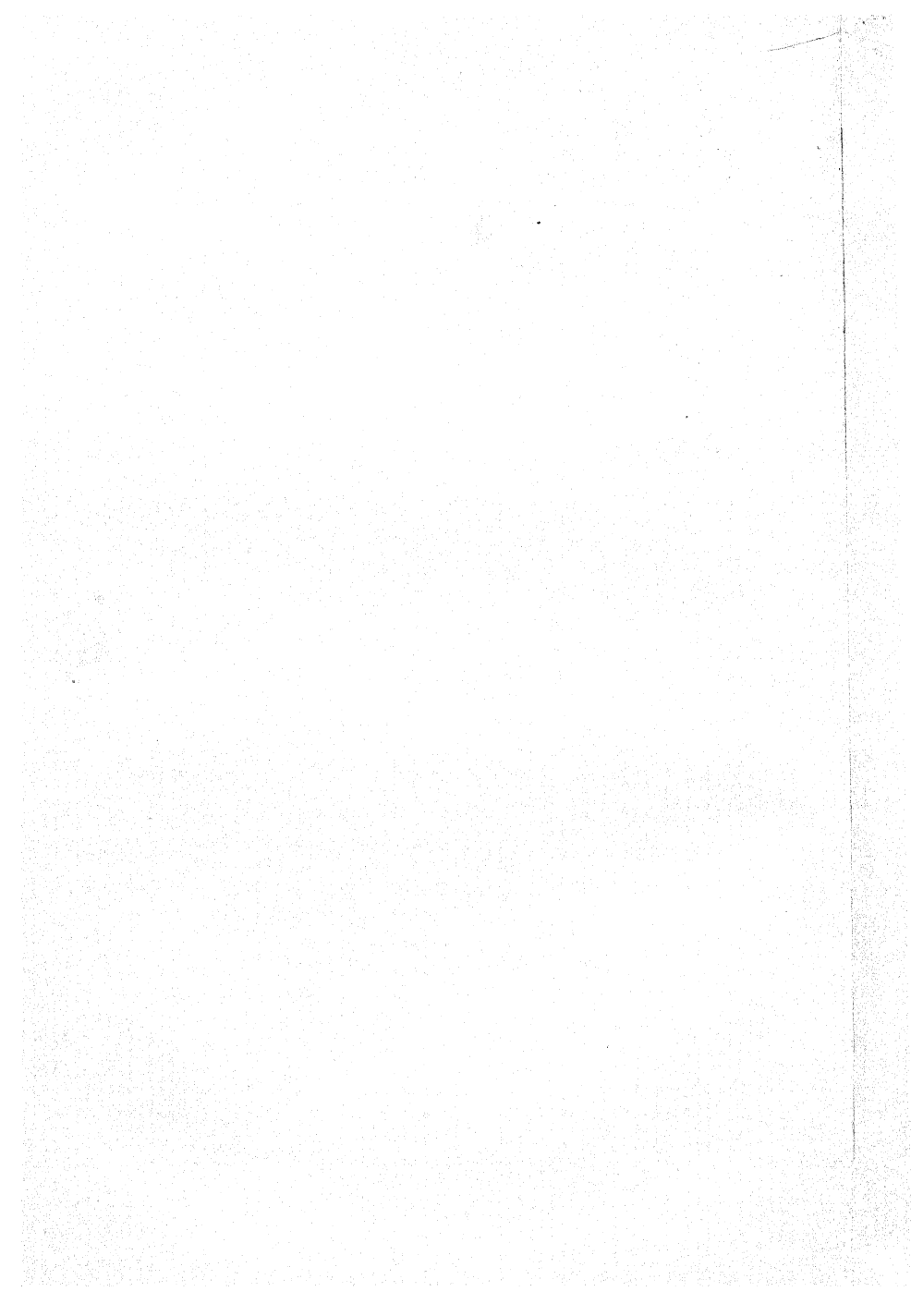
In the *Recollections of Vasíly Morózof*, we find an account of Tolstoy as seen from another aspect. After being one of the best scholars in Tolstoy's school in the early 'sixties, Morózof became a cabman in Toúla, but occasionally writes articles for the magazines.

In the 'eighties I heard wonderful things about Leo Nikolájevitch, from some of my mates from Yásnaya Polyána: how he had become a simple working-man, a ploughman, a mower, a sower, a woodsman, a stovebuilder, a carpenter, and a bootmaker. All peasant-craft came naturally to him. The tales my mates told me were surprising. My good friend and schoolfellow, Ignát Makárof, said to me, 'You would not know Leo Nikolájevitch as he is now, Morózof! You remember



COUNTESS TATIÁNA L. TOLSTOY.

*After a sketch by Gay, 1885.*



when we were at school? He was good to us then; but now he is still better, and is so to everybody. You should just see how he works: how he ploughs, how he mows! You know how strong he is! Why, if the horse were too weak, you might harness *him* to the plough! And how he works with us in the village! He is not afraid of the illnesses that are about—not even of cholera. That's how we have trained him. . . . He even boasts about his work. 'Ah, Ignát,' he says, 'I was quite done-up yesterday, but how well I slept!' And I say to him, 'The sleep itself is worth working for.' And he, 'Yes, yes, Ignát! That's true!' . . . You should drive over to Leo Nikoláyevitch's, Morózof. He would be glad to see you; he often asks: 'How is Morózof getting on?'—You come, and we will call on him together, and he will give us some books. I have already had many good books from him.'

My soul felt light and joyful after this talk with my friend, who understands goodness as I do.

So I got ready to go to Yásnaya Polyána, to visit my relations and see Leo Nikoláyevitch. Hardly had I got there and put up my horse, when my eighty-year-old aunt came running out and began telling me how hard it was for her to live in this world.

'I have nothing,' she said, 'not a stick of my own. But the Count be thanked, and God give him health! He stands up for us forlorn ones; he has brought in my hay, and carted the manure, and ploughed the fallow, and done the sowing. God give him health and strength! . . . And see now! He is rebuilding our homestead. He brought the timber himself. . . . The old hut was ready to fall in on us altogether. . . .'

After a chat with my aunt, I went to see Leo Nikoláyevitch the carpenter. I did not go near at once, but stopped where I could not myself be seen, to watch them. I stood admiring their work. Dear me! What had become of Leo Nikoláyevitch? Hair and beard are quite grey, and he has become wrinkled . . . he has grown old. But look how he sits astride on the top beam, cutting out a place for the cross-rafter to fit into! His shirt-sleeves are turned up, his unbuttoned shirt shows his bare chest; his hair is dishevelled. The locks in his beard shake at each blow of the axe. He has

a chisel stuck in his girdle behind, and a hand-saw hangs from his waist. . . .

After seeing Leo Nikoláyevitch at his work as a carpenter, I had a talk with him which still remains in my mind.

For me, the meaning of 'Count' and his 'His Excellency' has quite gone: but the idea of Daddy Leo the carpenter, Daddy Leo the ploughman, the mower, the oven-builder, have become quite distinct. And his words about goodness remain with me. 'Let me not waste the short time left me! To-day I am alive; to-morrow, in my grave.'

I became attached to Leo Nikoláyevitch with my whole soul, and often planned to get an interview with him. He was always repeating, 'Love and goodness,' and praising country life, labour, healthy appetite and sound sleep.

1886 The next year, 1886, began sadly with the death, on 18th January, of the four-year-old Alexéy, from croup.

Anna Seuron says:

Thirty-six hours were enough to turn the Count's charming little boy, blooming with health, into a corpse. He caught cold while out for a walk in a north wind. The doctor mistaking the disease, treated him merely for sore throat, and afterwards admitted his blunder.

The Count behaved fittingly in accord with his later writings. 'For those of firm mind, death is but a reminder.' But when, at the dying boy's request, he was called to his bedside, he ran along the corridor like an eighteen-year-old lad, and yet managed to enter the room with a show of calmness.

The boy glanced at his father, convinced himself that it was really he, and raising his little hand and eyes towards the ceiling, said distinctly: 'I see . . . I see . . .' — 'What?' asked the Countess, but no reply came.

Though at that time, says Anna Seuron, Tolstoy rejected priests and ceremonies, he nevertheless allowed the funeral to take place in the usual way.

As is customary in Russian families, little was said of the

death that had occurred. Alexéy was a thin, wise, meditative boy. The Countess herself possesses something that counts in the spiritual world—a sort of electric spark or spiritual fire, which corresponds to her rapid, lively speech; and the lad had inherited the good qualities of both his parents.

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## CHAPTER VII

### WHAT THEN MUST WE DO ?

The lives of rich and poor. Servants. The cause of poverty. Ashamed of alms-giving. 'Mad money.' The inexhaustible purse. Money an evil. 'What then must we do?' Why he could not help the poor. Complexity of our social life. A child-prostitute. The washerwoman. The factory-workers. Poverty the corollary of riches. How simplifying life helps. The value of work. Doctrines hiding the truth. The division of labour. Indictment of scientists, writers, and artists. Two castes: feasters and workers. What to do? The Most-Illustrious-Military-Prince Blohin. Manual labour. The wretchedness of our life. Its danger. Property the root of evil. What is real property? Woman's duty. An appeal to mothers. The flaw in the remedy. Tolstoy's no-money attitude. Value of his economic work.

HAVING convinced himself that there is a connection between the lives of the rich and of the poor, Tolstoy had attacked the problem of poverty. His book on that subject, *What Then Must We Do ?* was finished in February 1886. I have already quoted from its earlier chapters, and will now summarise the remainder, giving passages of autobiographical value *in extenso*.

Tolstoy tells us that he saw that his life was bad ; but, he says: 'I did not deduce the conclusion that I must improve my life and live better, but formed the strange opinion that I must correct other people's lives.' He soon, however, decided that this was impossible. Next he

began to reflect on the differences between town and country life.

The town paupers (or their fathers) had come from the country to obtain a living in town. But why did they come from the country, where there are trees, meadows, grain, horses, cattle, and all the riches of the earth, to town, where instead of these things there are only stones and dust? He proceeds to tell how wealth produced in the country is attracted to town; and how the country-folk follow this wealth, hoping, by serving the rich as waiters, footmen, cabmen, or prostitutes, or by making carriages, fashionable clothes, etc., for them, to recover some of that wealth. He says:

‘We who share in the unceasing orgie that goes on among the rich in the towns, may be so accustomed to it that it seems to us natural for one person to live in five immense rooms, heated by fuel enough to cook the food and warm the lodgings of two families; to employ two horses and two attendants when we drive half-a-mile; to cover our parquet floors with carpets, and to spend, I will not say £500 or £1000 on a ball, but say £2 or £3 on a Christmas Tree; yet a man who needs £1 for bread for his family, or whose last sheep is being taken to pay a 15-shilling tax, and who cannot obtain the money even by heavy toil, cannot get accustomed to it. We think it all seems natural to the poor. There are people so naïve as even to say that the poor are very grateful to us for feeding them by our luxury. But being poor does not deprive men of reason; and the poor reason as we do. When *we* hear of a man losing or wasting a thousand or two thousand pounds, we immediately think, “What a stupid and worthless fellow he is, and how well I could have used that money for a building I have long wanted, or to improve my farm, etc.”; and the poor reason just in the same way, when they see wealth senselessly wasted; and they do it the more insistently because they need the

money not to satisfy some caprice, but to supply things they urgently need. . . .

‘The poor never have admitted and never will admit that it is right for some to have a continual holiday, while others must always fast and work. At first it astonishes and angers them to see it. Then they grow accustomed to it; and seeing that such arrangements are considered lawful, they themselves try to avoid work, and to share in the perpetual holiday.

‘One often hears people complain of the conduct of their servants. Servants often really do behave badly, but this is not to be attributed to natural perversity, so much as to the example set by their employers. If—as that example often suggests to them—it is good to enjoy oneself and not to work, what more natural than that they should seek to share these good things as much as they can? Some succeed, and join the ever-feasting ones; others approach that position; while others break down before reaching their aim, and having lost the habit of work, fill our brothels and doss-houses. . . .

‘I looked at our life, and saw that intercourse with the poor is not accidentally made difficult for us, but that we intentionally make it so.

‘Observing our life—the life of the rich—I saw that all that we consider a blessing consists of, or at least is inseparably bound up with, things that divide us as much as possible from the poor. Indeed, the chief aim of all our efforts, beginning with food, clothing, lodging, and cleanliness, and including our education, is to distinguish ourselves from the poor. We spend at least nine-tenths of our wealth in thus distinguishing and separating ourselves from them by impassable walls. . . . The very way of taking food (dinners) becomes a matter of vanity and pride, and a means of separating oneself from other people. For a rich man to invite a poor man to his table, becomes unthinkable. One must know how to lead a lady to table,

how to bow, to sit, to eat, and how to use a finger-bowl, and only the rich can do these things.

‘It is the same with dress and houses. Fashions spring up, which are just what separate the rich from the poor.

‘It is even more obviously the same with apartments. That one may be able to live alone in ten rooms, it is necessary that those who live ten in a room should not see it. The richer a man is, the more difficult it is to get at him, the more hall-porters there are between him and those who are not rich, and the more impossible it is to let a poor man walk on his carpets or sit on one of his satin chairs.

‘It is the same with our methods of getting about. A peasant riding in a cart or sledge must be very hard-hearted not to give a lift to one who is walking: it is easy to do it, and there is room enough. But the richer the conveyance, the less possible is it to give any one a ride. Some of the most elegant vehicles are even called “sulkies.”

‘It is the same with the cult of cleanliness, which a workman who has “got on” finds it so hard to acquire, and which only confirms the proverb: “White hands love other men’s work.” . . .

‘Now, a napkin serves for two days; to-morrow it will serve for one day, and then two a day will be needed. To-day the footman’s hands must be clean, to-morrow he must wear gloves, and wearing clean gloves must hand you a letter on a clean tray. And to this kind of cleanliness (which is of no use except to separate us from others and make intercourse with them impossible) there is no limit, when it is obtained by other people’s labour.

‘Nor is that all. When I examined the matter, I became convinced that what we call education, is also the same thing. . . .

‘Between us—the rich—and the poor, stands a wall of cleanliness and education, raised by us and built of our

wealth, and before we can help the poor, we must first destroy that wall. . . .

‘So I again came to the conclusion that our wealth is the cause of the misery of the poor!’

One of the things that long puzzled Tolstoy, was the fact that if he gave sixpence to a beggar and walked on, the man seemed grateful; but if he stopped, talked, and entered into the man’s troubles, he never knew how much he ought to give, and however much he gave, the man seemed disappointed. On one such occasion Tolstoy gave a man £1, and the fellow went away without even thanking him.

There were cases in which, after repeatedly rendering help, he ceased doing so; but on such occasions, however badly the people had behaved, Tolstoy always felt painfully ashamed of himself.

What, he asks, was this feeling of shame? And he tells of an occurrence which helped him to a conclusion:

‘It was in the country. I wanted 20 copecks [5d.] to give to a pilgrim, and I sent my son to borrow it from some one; he brought it, and told me he had got it from the man-cook. A few days later some more pilgrims called, and I again wanted 20 copecks. I had a rouble, and remembering that I owed money to the cook, I went to the kitchen hoping to get change. I said: “I borrowed 20 copecks from you; here’s a rouble.” . . . Before I had finished speaking, he called his wife from the next room. “Paráša, take it,” said he. Thinking she understood what I wanted, I handed her the rouble. I must mention that the cook had only been with us a week, and though I had seen his wife, I had never spoken to her. Just as I was going to ask her for change, she quickly bent over my hand and wished to kiss it [a common expression of gratitude in Russia] evidently supposing that I was giving her the rouble. I muttered something and left the kitchen.

I felt ashamed, more painfully ashamed than I had done for years. I even writhed, and felt that I was making a grimace; and I groaned as I ran out of the kitchen. This shame, which seemed to me quite undeserved and unexpected, struck me particularly, both because I had long not experienced such a feeling, and because I thought that I, an old man, did not deserve it. I related the occurrence to those at home, and to some acquaintances, and they all agreed that they would have felt the same. And I began to think: "Why was I so ashamed?"

I must omit Tolstoy's account of how, walking into Moscow with the men with whom he worked at wood-cutting, he awoke to the fact that if he gave as large a proportion of his property as they did to a beggar they happened to meet, he would have to give some hundreds of pounds.

"The conclusion to which this led me, explained to me my feeling of shame with the cook's wife, and with all the poor to whom I have given, and still give, money.

"What, indeed, is this money I give to the poor? In most cases it is such a small fraction of my property that it cannot be expressed in figures intelligible to Semyón [the labourer] or to the cook's wife: it is generally about a one-millionth part. I give so little, that for me it is not and cannot be a deprivation; it is only a diversion indulged in when and as I please. That was how the cook's wife understood me. If I give a rouble or 20 copecks to a man from the street, why should I not give her a rouble? To give away money like that, is in her eyes the same as for gentlefolk to throw gingerbread among a crowd; it is an amusement for those who possess "mad money." I was ashamed, because the mistake she made showed me plainly what she, and the poor in general, think about me: "He throws mad (*i.e.* unearned) money about."

‘Where, indeed, has my money sprung from? Part of it I have got from the land I inherited from my father. A peasant sells his last sheep or cow to pay it to me. The other part of my money I have got from my writings, from books. If my books are harmful, I only place temptation in the path of those who buy them, and the money I receive is ill-gotten; but if my books are of use, the case is still worse. I do not give them to people, but say, “Give me Rs. 17 [34s., the price of Tolstoy’s Collected Works at that time] and then I will give them you.” And as in the one case the peasant sold his last sheep, so here a poor student, a teacher, or any poor man, deprives himself of the things he needs, to give me that money. And I have thus got together much money, and what do I do with it? I bring it to town and give some of it to the poor if they also come to town and obey my whims and clean the pavement and my lamps and boots, and work for me in factories. For this money I get all I can out of them: *i.e.* I try to give them as little, and to take as much, as possible. And, quite unexpectedly, without any particular reason, I suddenly begin giving away this same money to these same poor people; not to all of them, but to some whom I select. How can each of them help thinking that perhaps he may have the luck to be one of those with whom I shall amuse myself when I distribute my mad money?

‘Chuckling away farthings with one hand to those whom it pleases me to select, while gathering thousands from the poor with the other, I called “doing good”! Is it then surprising that I felt ashamed? . . . What I felt from the first, at the sight of the hungry and cold people in Lyápinsky House: namely, that it was my fault, and that one could not, could not, *could not* go on living as I was doing, was the one thing that was really true!

‘It was hard for me to reach this consciousness; but when I had reached it, I was horrified at the delusion I

had been living in. I was up to my ears in mud, yet thought I could drag others out of it.

‘What, indeed, do I want? I want to do good. I want to arrange that people should not be cold and hungry, and should live in a way fit for human beings. I want this; and I see that by violence, extortion, and all kinds of tricks, in which I participate, necessities are taken from the workers, while the non-workers (of whom I am one) consume in superfluities the fruits of the labour of those who toil.

‘I see that this exploitation is so arranged that the more cunning and complex the tricks a man employs (or that those from whom he inherits have employed) the more he commands of the work of others, and the less he works himself.

‘I see that the life of the working-people demands strain and labour (as all natural life necessarily does) but that in consequence of the tricks that deprive these people of necessities and make their life hard, it becomes worse and more full of privations year by year, while our life—the life of the non-workers—(with the help of science and art directed to this end) becomes each year more superabundant, attractive and secure. I see that in our time working-folk, especially the old men, the women and the children, simply perish from intense work and insufficient nourishment . . . while in the case of the lucky ones (of whom I am one) the life of the non-workers reaches a degree of security which in olden times people only dreamed of in fairy tales. We have reached the condition of the owner of the purse with the inexhaustible rouble: that is to say, a position in which a man is not merely freed from the law of labour for the maintenance of life, but is able, without labour, to use all life’s bounties, and to hand on to his children, or to whom he likes, that purse with the inexhaustible rouble. . . . I see that the ideal of an industrious life has been



replaced by the ideal of an inexhaustible purse. . . . I sit on a man's neck, weighing him down and making him carry me, and yet assure myself and others that I pity him greatly and wish to ease his lot by all possible means—except by getting off his back ! . . .

‘And I came to feel that in money itself, in the very possession of money, there is something evil and immoral ; and that money itself, and the fact that I possess it, is one of the chief causes of the evils I saw around me—and I asked myself, What is money ?’

Tolstoy devotes several chapters to the consideration of this question. He says that, wherever on the one hand we find people consuming luxuriously without producing, and on the other people overworked and wretchedly poor—there, slavery exists ; and it is always based on violence. Conquerors raid a country, they make chattel-slaves of the inhabitants, or exact tribute, or seize the land and establish a feudal system, or they tax the people ; and when money has once been introduced, it becomes possible (by combining taxation with the monopolisation of land and the means of production, and with forcible protection of ‘the rights of property’) to make it impossible for people to get food or shelter except by paying money they have not got. The bulk of the population can thus be practically enslaved and made to work for the rich, without any one being put to the trouble of keeping them as chattel-slaves, and without any one being responsible for their maintenance when they are worn out. Money makes the poor the common slaves of all the rich.

He goes on to point out that people are seldom greatly shocked by forms of slavery customary in their own day ; and that Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, and the greatest Roman writers, regarded chattel-slavery as necessary and normal. Our exploitation of the labourers is, he says, as unjustifiable as the chattel-slavery of the ancient world,

or the serfdom which existed in Russia when he was a young man.

Money does not usually represent work done by its owner. It represents power to make other people work. It is the modern form of slavery.

He makes some one say: 'I have done nothing, do nothing, and shall do nothing but cut coupons from my interest-bearing bonds, and I firmly believe that money represents work.'—'Surely,' Tolstoy adds, 'this is wonderful! Talk about madmen! What degree of madness could be worse than this? . . . A coupon-cutter—the representative of work! Work! Yes, but whose? Evidently not the work of him who owns the coupons, but of him who works!' . . .

'I wished to help the unfortunate, and I had money, and shared the common superstition that money represents work, or at any rate is a lawful and good thing. But having begun to give away money, I saw that I was giving bills drawn on the poor. . . . And so the absurdity of what I had wished to do—help the poor by making demands on them—became evident to me.

'These considerations supplied me with the answer to my question, What to do?

'As soon as I had understood what riches are and what money is, I understood the truth handed down from the earliest times by Buddha, Isaiah, Lao-Tsze, Socrates, and to us most clearly and indubitably by Jesus Christ and his forerunner, John the Baptist. In reply to my question: "What must we do?" John said simply, briefly, and clearly; "He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath food, let him do likewise!" The same was said many times by Christ, with even greater clearness. He said: "Blessed are the poor, and woe unto the rich." He said it is impossible to serve God and Mammon. He forbade the disciples to take either money or two coats. He told the rich youth that

because he was rich he could not enter the Kingdom of God, and that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God. He said that he who does not leave all: house and children and fields, to follow him, is not his disciple. He told the parable of the rich man who, like our rich men, did nothing wrong, but merely dressed well and ate and drank nice things, and thereby lost his soul; and of the beggar Lazarus, who did nothing good, but was saved merely because he was poor.

‘I understood that man, besides living for his personal welfare, must serve the welfare of others, as bees do. . . . I understood that this law has been, and is being infringed by the fact that people, like robber-bees, by using force, free themselves from labour and exploit the labour of others, directing it not for the common welfare, but to satisfy their ever-growing personal desires, and (again like robber-bees) thereby destroy themselves. I understood that man’s unhappiness comes from the slavery in which some men hold others. I understood that the slavery of our times is caused by violence; by the army-system, the monopolisation of land, and the exaction of money. And having understood the meaning of these three instruments of the new slavery, I could not but wish to free myself from using them.

‘When I was a serf-owner, and came to understand the immorality of that position, I, like others who understood it, tried to free myself from it. Considering my rights as slave-owner immoral, I tried to press them as little as possible until I was able quite to get rid of them; living, and letting the serfs live, as though such rights did not exist, and trying by all means to instil into other slave-owners a sense of the wrongfulness and inhumanity of our imaginary rights. Now I cannot but do the same with reference to the present-day slavery: namely, press my claims as little as possible, until I can quite renounce the

power given me by the possession of land and money protected by army violence; and at the same time I cannot but use all means to instil into others a sense of the wrongfulness and inhumanity of these imaginary rights. A slave-owner's participation in slavery consists in using the labour of others, whether that slavery rests on our right to own slaves, or on our possession of land or money.

'The rejection of the customary methods of exploiting the labour of others, brings one inevitably to the necessity, on the one hand, of moderating one's requirements; and, on the other, of doing for oneself what others used to do for us.

'And that most simple and inevitable deduction permeates all the details of my life, altering them all; and frees me from the moral sufferings I experienced at the sight of men's misery and vice; and at once destroys all the three causes which made it impossible for me to help the poor.

'The first cause was the aggregation of people in towns, where the riches of the country are devoured.

'The second cause was the separation of the rich from the poor.

'The third cause was shame, arising from a consciousness of the immorality of my ownership of the money wherewith I wished to help others. . . .

'Finally I came to the following simple conclusion: that in order not to produce suffering and vice, I ought to consume as little as possible of the work of others, and do as much work as possible myself. I came, by a long road, to the unavoidable deduction formulated a thousand years ago by the Chinese, in their saying: "If there is one man idle, there is another dying of hunger."

'It is true that all our interests are interwoven, but each man's conscience tells him without much reckoning to whose credit goes the work, and to whose debit the idle-

ness. And not conscience alone tells this: it is most clearly told by one's cash-book. The more money a man spends, the more work he obliges others to do for him; and the less he spends, the more he works. . . .'

I must perforce omit much of Tolstoy's argument, but will quote one more of those personal incidents which make this tractate so interesting:

'Last year [1884], in March, I was returning home late one evening. Turning from the Zoubof Street into the Homóvnitchesky Side-street, I saw a black spot on the snow of the Maidens' Field. Something was moving there. I should have paid no attention to it, had not the policeman standing at the corner of the street shouted in the direction of the black spot:

"Vasily! Why don't you bring her?"

"She won't come," replied a voice from there, and then the spot moved towards the policeman.

'I stopped and asked the policeman, "What is it?"

'He said: "They have arrested some wenches at Rzhánof House, and are taking them to the police-station, but one of them's lagging behind. She won't come along."

'A house-porter in a short sheepskin coat was bringing her. She walked in front, and he kept pushing her from behind. We all—I, the house-porter, and the policeman—had winter things on, but she had nothing over her dress. In the dark I could only distinguish a brown dress, and a kerchief over her head and neck. She was short, as starvelings are, with short legs and a comparatively wide, ill-shaped figure.

"Now, carrion! We're waiting for you! Come along, can't you? I'll give it you!" shouted the policeman. It was plain he was tired and had lost patience with her. She went a few steps and again stopped. The elderly porter, a good-natured fellow (I know him personally) twisted her arm.

"I'll teach you to stop! Get on!" said he, pretending to be angry. She staggered, and spoke in a grating voice. Every sound she uttered was a false note, hoarse and squeaking.

"Now then! What are you shoving for? I'll get there!"

"You'll freeze," said the porter.

"Our kind don't freeze! I'm a hot 'un!"

She meant this for a joke, but it sounded like abuse. Near the lamp, which stands by the gate of our house, she again stopped and leant—almost fell—against the wooden fence of the yard, and began fumbling in her petticoat with clumsy, benumbed fingers. Again they shouted at her, but she only muttered and went on with what she was doing. She held in one hand a bent cigarette, and in the other some sulphur-matches. I stopped, ashamed to go past her, and ashamed to stand and look on. At last I made up my mind, and went up to her. She leant with her shoulder against the wall and vainly drew the matches along it and threw them away. I looked at her face. She was a starveling, but, as it seemed to me, no longer young: I supposed her to be about thirty. She had a dirty-coloured knob of a nose; lips crooked, slobbering and turned down at the corners; and from under her kerchief a short lock of dry hair escaped. Her figure was long and flat, and she had short legs and arms. I stopped opposite to her. She looked at me and smirked, as if to say she knew what I was thinking about.

"I felt that I had to say something to her, and I wished to show her that I pitied her.

"Are your parents alive?" I asked.

She laughed hoarsely; then suddenly stopped, and raising her brows, looked at me.

"Are your parents alive?" I repeated.

She smirked with an expression which seemed to say, "You have found a queer thing to ask about!"

"I have a mother," said she. "But what's that to you?"

"And how old are you?"

"Over fifteen," said she, promptly answering a question she was evidently accustomed to.

"Now, get on! We shall freeze to death with you here, blast you!" shouted the policeman; and she pushed off from the wall, and staggered down the Homóvnitchesky Side-street to the police-station; and I turned in at the gate, entered the house, and asked if my daughter had returned? I was told she had been to a party, had enjoyed herself very much, had returned, and was already asleep.

'Next morning I wanted to go to the police-station to learn what they had done with this unfortunate woman, and I was setting out rather early, when one of those gentry whose weaknesses have caused them to lose standing among their own class, and who are now up and now down again, came to see me. I had known him three years. During those years he had several times pawned all he possessed even to the clothes he was wearing; and this had re-occurred quite recently, and now he was spending his nights in one of the night-lodgings at Rzhánof House, and coming to me during the day. He met me at the entrance, and without listening to what I wanted to say, began at once to tell me what had happened at Rzhánof House that night. He began to speak, but had not told half, when suddenly he—an old man who had seen all phases of life—burst into tears, began to sob, stopped speaking, and turned to the wall. This is what he said. All he told me was perfectly true. I afterwards verified it on the spot, and learnt many fresh details, which I will add to his story:

'On the ground-floor in No. 32 of the night-lodging-house where my friend slept, among the shifting lodgers, men and women, who came together for 5 copecks (5 farthings), there lived a washerwoman of about thirty,

light-haired, quiet and well-conducted, but sickly. The landlady of the tenement was a boatman's mistress. In summer her lover keeps a boat, but in winter he lives by letting bunks for the night, at 3 copecks without a pillow, or 5 copecks with a pillow. The washerwoman had lived there for some months. Though she was a quiet woman, the lodgers—especially an eighty-year-old, half-mad woman, a permanent resident—had latterly taken a dislike to her because she coughed and prevented them from sleeping. The washerwoman, owing to failing strength, was less and less often able to go to work, and so she was unable to pay her rent. At last, after being for a whole week unable to work, the landlady ordered her to leave, as she already owed 60 copecks, and the other lodgers wished to be rid of her.

‘When the landlady told the washerwoman to pay up or go, the old woman was delighted, and pushed her out into the yard. The washerwoman went away, but returned an hour later; and the landlady had not the heart to drive her away again, and did not do it the next day, or the day after. “Where am I to go?” said the washerwoman. But on the third day the landlady’s lover, a Moscovite, and one who knew town ways and regulations, went to the police. A policeman, with a sword, and a pistol hanging by a red cord, came to the lodging and, using only polite and proper words, fetched the washerwoman out into the street.

‘It was a bright and sunny but frosty day in March. Water was running down the gutters, and the house-porters were breaking up the ice on the pavements. The sledges of the cabbies bumped on the frozen snow, or squeaked as they scraped on bare stones. The washerwoman walked along the sunny side of the steeply-rising street till she reached the church and sat down on the sunny side of its porch. But when the sun began to set behind the houses, and the frost began again to glaze the



puddles, she felt cold and frightened. She got up and dragged herself along . . . where to? Home—to the only home she had had latterly. Here and there she stopped to rest; and it was getting dark before she reached Rzhánof House. On reaching the gate she turned, slipped, uttered an exclamation, and fell.

‘One man passed, and then another. “Must be drunk!” Another stumbled over her, and said to the house-porter, “Some drunken woman is lying at your gate. I nearly broke my head tumbling over her. Get her moved away, can’t you?”’

‘The porter went to see about it . . . but the washer-woman was dead!’

‘After hearing my friend’s story, I went to the police-station, meaning to go on from there to Rzhánof House to get further details.

‘. . . At first the officer in charge listened to me attentively, but then smiled at my ignorance of the reason for which the women are brought to the police-station [for medical examination as prostitutes], and especially at my being surprised at her youth.

“Why, some of them are twelve and thirteen, and lots of them are fourteen!” said he gaily.

‘As to those arrested yesterday, he explained that they had probably been sent to the Committee (I think that was what he said); and he replied vaguely when I asked where they had spent the night. He did not remember the particular girl I was asking about—there are so many of them every day.

‘At Rzhánof House, in No. 32, I found a *diatchók* [clerical chanter] already reading the Psalms over the body of the deceased. She had been placed on what used to be her bunk; and the lodgers (all quite poor people) had collected enough to pay for a Church Service, a coffin, and a shroud; and the old woman had laid out the body decently. The *diatchók* was reading in the dim

light, a woman in a cloak stood there holding a wax-candle; and near her, holding another such candle, stood a man (a gentleman, I should say) in a clean overcoat with a good Astrakhan collar, shiny goloshes, and a starched shirt. This was the dead woman's brother. They had traced and found him.

'I went past the corpse to the landlady's corner, and asked her about it all.

'She was evidently afraid that she might be accused of something; but after a while she began to speak freely, and told me all about it. On my way back, I looked at the dead woman. The dead are always good to look at, but she seemed particularly good and touching in her coffin: her face clean and pale, with prominent closed eyes, sunken cheeks and soft brown hair above the high brows. The face was weary, kindly, and not sad, but surprised. And indeed, if the living do not see, the dead must be surprised!

'The day I wrote this down, there was a great ball in Moscow.

'That evening I went out after eight o'clock. I live in a place surrounded by factories, and I went out after the sounding of the whistles, which, at the end of a week's unceasing work, let the men out for a holiday.

'I passed, and was passed by, workmen going towards the dram-shops and *traktirs*. Many were already drunk, and many had women with them.

'I live amid factories. Every morning at five, a whistle is heard; then a second, a third, a tenth, and others further and further away. That means that work has begun for women and children and old men. At eight o'clock the whistle sounds again for half-an-hour's rest. At noon there is a third whistle. That means an hour for dinner; and at eight a fourth sounds, for closing.

'Curiously enough, all the three factories around me produce articles needed for balls.

‘At the nearest of them, stockings are made ; at another, silks ; and at the third, scents and pomades.

‘One may hear these whistles and think of them only as indications of time. “Ah, there’s the whistle—now it’s time for my walk” ; but one may realise what really is the case : that the first whistle, at 5 A.M., means that people—sleeping in damp cellars, often men and women side by side—get up in the dark, and hurry into the buildings where the machines drone, and take their places at work to which they foresee no end and, for themselves, no use ; and so they work, often in hot, stuffy, dirty rooms, with very short intervals, for one, two, three, twelve and more hours a day. They sleep and again get up, and again recommence that work, to which they are driven by sheer necessity.

‘So one week passes after another, with the intervening holidays. And now I see these people let out for one of their days of rest. They come out into the street ; everywhere are *traktírs*, Imperial dram-shops, and women. And tipsily they drag one another—and girls such as the one that was taken to the police-station—by the hand, and hire sledges, and ride or walk from one *traktír* to another ; swearing and staggering and saying they know not what. I used to see such staggering factory-hands and fastidiously avoided them, and almost blamed them ; but since I have heard those whistles day by day and know their meaning, I am only surprised that all the men do not become loafers such as those of whom Moscow is full, and all the women such as the girl I saw outside my gate.

So I walked about and watched these workmen stroll through the streets, till about 11 P.M. Then they began to disappear. Only a few drunken ones remained, and here and there one saw men and women taken to the police-station. And then, from all sides, carriages appeared all driving in one direction.

On the boxes were coachmen and footmen : smartly

dressed and wearing cockades. Well-fed, caparisoned trotters flew over the snow at fourteen miles an hour; and in the carriages were ladies wrapped in circular cloaks, careful of their flowers and coiffures. Everything, from the horses' harness, the carriages, the rubber-tyres, and the cloth of the coachmen's coats, to the stockings, shoes, flowers, velvet, gloves, and scents—was made by those who were sprawling, some drunk in their bunks in the dormitories, some in the night-lodging-house with prostitutes, and some at the lock-up. Past them, drove the guests to the ball; and it never entered their heads that there was any connection between the ball to which they were going, and those drunkards at whom their coachman shouted so sternly.

‘These people, with quiet consciences, amuse themselves at the ball: amuse themselves from eleven at night to six in the morning, through the dead of night, while people in the night-lodging-houses lie with empty stomachs, or—some of them—die like the washerwoman.

‘The amusement consists in women and girls baring their breasts, padding themselves out behind, and showing themselves in this unseemly condition, in which an unperverted girl or woman would not for the world wish to exhibit herself to a man; and in that half-nude state . . . with dresses drawn tight to their thighs, women and girls (whose first virtue has always been modesty) appear in the strongest illumination, among strange men similarly tightly clad, whom to the sound of intoxicating music they embrace, and with whom they whirl round. The old women, often exposing their persons as much as the young ones, sit, look on, and eat and drink nice things. The old men do the same. It is not surprising that this is done at night, when the common people, being all asleep, do not see it. But that is not done for concealment's sake; it seems to the doers that there is nothing to conceal, and that it is very good that by this amusement—wherein

they consume the painful labour of thousands—they not only injure no one, but actually feed the poor!

‘It may be very amusing at balls. But how comes it to be so? If among ourselves we see that some one has not eaten or is cold, we are ashamed to be merry, and cannot be merry till he has been fed and warmed; and we cannot understand people who can make merry with sports that cause others to suffer. The mirth of cruel boys who squeeze a dog’s tail in a trap and make merry over it, repels and is unintelligible to us.

‘How is it that here in our merriment blindness has befallen us, and that we do not see the trap in which we squeeze the tails of those who suffer from our amusement?

‘For each of the women who went to that ball in a 150-rouble dress, was not born at a ball, nor at Madame Minangoy’s [the fashionable Moscow dressmaker] but has lived in the country and seen peasants, and knows her nurse and her lady’s-maid, who have poor fathers or brothers for whom to earn Rs. 150, to build a hut, is the aim of a long and laborious life. She knows this—then how can she make merry, knowing that at that ball she carries on her bared body the hut which was the dream of her good maid’s brother? But, granting that this may not have struck her—the fact that velvet, silk, sweets, flowers, laces and dresses do not grow of themselves, but are made by people, is one which it would seem she could not but know. One would think she must know what kind of people make these things, and under what conditions they make them, and why. She must know that it is not for love of her that the seamstress she scolded has made her this dress; and she must therefore know that it has all been made for her under compulsion: dress and lace and flowers and velvet. Perhaps, however, she is so stupefied that she does not see this; but the fact that five or six people, old, decent, often infirm footmen and servants, have missed their sleep and been put to trouble

for her—that, at least, she cannot help knowing. She has seen their weary, gloomy faces. She cannot but know also, that the frost that night reached 31 degrees below zero Fahrenheit, and that in that frost the old coachman sat all night on the box. But I know that people really do not see this. And if, from the hypnotism produced by the ball, young women and girls do not see it, they are not to blame. They, poor things, do what their elders consider good; but can the elders explain their cruelty?

‘The elders always give one and the same explanation: “I force no one; I buy things and hire people—maids and coachmen. There is nothing wrong in buying and hiring. . . .”

‘I like cleanliness, and give my money only on condition that a laundress washes the shirt I change twice a day, and the work has drained her last strength, and she has died.

“What is there wrong in that? People will go on buying and hiring whether I do or not, and will buy, and compel others to make velvet and sweets and cigarettes; and will go on hiring people to wash shirts, even if I don’t. Then why deprive myself of velvet and sweets and cigarettes and clean shirts, since things are so arranged?” I often—almost always—hear this argument.

‘Were we not so far astray from the truth, one would be ashamed to reply to such a question; but we are so entangled that the question appears natural, and ashamed as one is to answer it, one has to do so.

‘What difference will it make if I wear my shirt a week instead of a day, and make my cigarettes myself, or give up smoking?

‘This difference: that some washerwoman or cigarette-maker will strain her strength less, and the money I should have paid for the washing and cigarette-making, I can give to that washerwoman, or even to quite other washerwomen and workers who are weary of work and who, instead of

working beyond their strength, may then rest and drink tea. But I hear a reply to this (so reluctant are the rich, luxurious people to understand their position). It is said: "Even if I did agree to wear a dirty shirt and not to smoke, but to give the money to the poor instead, it would still not save the poor from being bled of all they possess, and my drop in the ocean will not help matters."

'To such a retort, one is yet more ashamed to answer, but it must be answered. It is so common an objection, and the reply is so simple.

'If I went among savages and they treated me to tasty cutlets, and next day I learnt (perhaps saw) that these tasty cutlets were made of prisoners who had been chopped up to make them; then, if I consider it bad to eat people—however tasty the cutlets might be, and however general among those with whom I was living might be the custom of eating men, and however little the prisoners kept to serve as food might gain by my refusing a cutlet—still I should not, and could not, eat any more of them. I might even eat human flesh, if compelled by hunger, but at least I should not entertain guests or take part in entertainments with human flesh, and certainly I should not seek such entertainments, or take pride in them.'

'By what criterion ought we to estimate the value of the work we do? (1) By whether its utility is acknowledged by those for whom it is done, and (2) by the doer's desire to serve.'

Very reluctantly I omit Tolstoy's account of the former and the present theological, philosophical, and scientific justifications for the perpetuation of social injustice; but I must find room for part of his reply to the theory of 'the division of labour' as formulated by some scientists as an excuse for the exploitation of the poor,—and also for what he says about the evils of Government.

'Division of labour is a condition of the life of organisms

and of human societies ; but what, in human societies, are we to consider as organic division of labour? However much science may study the division of labour among the cells of the tapeworm, all such investigations will fail to induce a man to consider as just, a division of labour his reason and conscience repudiate.

‘However convincing may be the proofs of the division of labour among the cells of the organisms we investigate, man, so long as he is not deprived of reason, will still say that no one ought to have to weave cotton cloth all his life long ; and that this is not a division of labour, but an oppression of the poor.

‘The chief public evil from which the people suffer (not in Russia alone) is the Government—the innumerable quantity of officials ; and the cause of the economic distress of our time is overproduction : the making of a quantity of goods no one wants, or knows what to do with.

‘It would be strange to find a shoemaker who considered that people were bound to feed him because he unceasingly made boots which had long ceased to be wanted ; but what are we to say of those occupied with Government, Church, science and art, who do not produce anything palpable, or anything useful to the people, and whose goods find no demand, but who yet (pleading the division of labour) demand so boldly to be well fed and nicely dressed ?

‘There may be wizards whose activity meets a demand, and to whom cakes and ale are given ; but it is difficult to imagine that there can be wizards whose necromancy nobody wants, but who yet boldly demand to be well fed for their performances.

‘But that is just what is happening in our world, among those employed in Government and in Church, and on science and art. . . .

‘When a man can live on the backs of others from childhood till he is thirty, promising, when he has finished



his education, to do something useful which no one has asked him to do, and when from the age of thirty till death, he can go on living in the same way, still promising to do something no one has asked him to do—this cannot be, and in our society is not, a division of labour, but simply a seizure by the strong of the fruits of the labour of others: it is the very robbery theologians used to speak of as a “divine dispensation,” and that the philosophers afterwards spoke of as “a necessary form of life,” and that scientific science now calls “the organic division of labour.”

‘Division of labour always has existed in human society, and probably always will. But the question for us is, not that it exists and will exist, but to find a standard by which to see that the division shall be a fair one. . . .

‘We are so accustomed to our pampered, fat or enfeebled representatives of mental work, that it seems to us barbarous that a scientist or an artist should plough or cart manure. It seems to us as if all his wisdom would perish or be shaken to pieces on the cart, and the manure would soil the grand, artistic images he carries in his breast; but we are so accustomed to it, that it does not seem strange when a servant of science, *i.e.* a servant and teacher of truth, compelling others to do for him what he could do for himself, spends half his time in eating nice things, in smoking, gossip or Liberal tittle-tattle, reading the papers and novels, and visiting the theatres. It does not surprise us to see our philosopher at a restaurant, a theatre or a ball; nor is it strange to us to learn that those artists who delight and ennoble our souls, spend their life in drunkenness, card-playing, or with wenches, if not at something worse. . . .

‘To those who regard themselves as the representatives of the science and art of a particular period, it always seems as though they had done and were doing, and above

all were just about to do, wonderful miracles; and that apart from them, no real science or art has existed or does exist. So it seemed to the Sophists, the Schoolmen, the Alchemists, the Cabalists, the Talmudists, and to our scientific scientists and our art-for-art's-sakers.

'Science and art are as necessary for man as food and drink; they are even more necessary—but not all is science or art that we call so. . . . The highest aim of human wisdom has always been to know the sequence in which our knowledge should rank: what is most important and what is less important.

'Since man existed, there have always, among all people, been teachers who dealt with the knowledge of what is the destiny, and therefore the true welfare of man and of mankind. And *that* science has served as guide in defining the importance of all other knowledge, and of that which expresses it, namely, art. . . .

'From the dawn of history we everywhere and always find a dominant teaching, falsely calling itself science, and not revealing to people, but concealing from them, the meaning of life. So it was among the Egyptians, the Hindoos, the Chinese, and to some extent among the Greeks (the Sophists) and later, among the Mystics, Gnostics and Cabalists, and in the Middle Ages with the Schoolmen and Alchemists, and so on, everywhere, down to our own day.

'What peculiar luck is ours, that we live just at the particular time when the mental activity which calls itself science, not only does not err, but accomplishes (as we are constantly assured) extraordinary achievements! Does not that peculiar fortune result from the fact that man cannot and will not recognise his own deformity? How is it that of those other sciences, theological and cabalistic, nothing but words remain, while we are so peculiarly lucky?

‘Notice that the indications are exactly the same: the same self-satisfaction and blind assurance that we, just we, and only we, are on the real path, and are the first to tread it. The self-same expectation that there—directly—we shall discover something extraordinary; and, above all, the same sign exposing us, namely the fact that all our wisdom remains with us, while the mass of the people neither understand, nor accept, nor need it! Our position is a very sad one, but why not face it as it is?’

‘It is time to come to oneself, and look around.’

‘For we are, indeed, nothing but Scribes and Pharisees who have seated ourselves in Moses’ seat and taken the keys of the kingdom of heaven, neither entering in ourselves nor allowing others to enter. We, priests of science and art, are the most worthless frauds, with far less right to our position than the most cunning and depraved of the Church priests. For we have absolutely no right to our privileged position: we obtained it by guile, and keep it by fraud.’

‘The priests and clergy, of our own and of the Catholic Church, however depraved they may be, have this right to their position—that they at least say they teach life and salvation to the people. We have undermined them, and proved that they deceive, and taken their place; but we do not teach people how to live: we even admit that it is no use trying to learn it; but yet we suck the juice out of the people, and in return teach our children our Talmud of Greek and Latin Grammar, that they in turn may continue to lead the same parasitic life that we do.’

‘We say: there used to be castes, but we have none. But how is it that some people and their children work, while other people and their children do not? Fetch a Hindoo who does not know our language, and show him our life as it has gone on for some generations, and he will distinguish the same two chief, distinct castes of

workers and non-workers as exist among his people. As with them, so with us: the right not to work is given by a special initiation, which we call science and art, and in general, education.

‘It is that education, and the whole perversion of reason attached to it, that has brought us to the amazing state of insanity which causes us not to see what is clear and indubitable.

‘We eat up the lives of our brother men, and continue to consider ourselves Christian, humane, educated, and perfectly justified.

‘What, then, must we do?

‘I have described my sufferings, my searchings, and my solution of this question, and I think the solution I have arrived at will be valid for all sincere men who set themselves the same question. First of all, to the question: What must we do? I replied to myself: I must not lie, either to myself or to others, nor fear the truth wherever it may lead me. . . . We consider lies to others . . . to be bad; but are not afraid of lying to ourselves; yet the very worst, most downright and deceptive lie to others is as nothing in its effects, when compared with that lie to ourselves on which we have all built our lives.

‘Thanks to the sufferings to which my false path led me, I saw the falsehood of our life; and having acknowledged it I had the courage (at first only in thought) to follow reason and conscience, without considering what they would lead me to. And I was rewarded for that courage. All the complex, disjointed, confused, unmeaning phenomena of life around me, became at once intelligible, and the very things that formerly frightened me, now became attractive.

‘We are all very ready to overestimate the value of the work we do and the talent we possess; and part of the process of telling oneself the truth, must be entirely to renounce the idea that, because one has had a university

education or other advantages, one is therefore exempt from the duty of sharing the hard manual labour done by those who have been less privileged.

‘Only when I began to look on myself as a man like all others, did my path become plain to me. Following that path, one must try first of all to feed oneself honestly : that is to say, learn not to live on the necks of others, but take every opportunity to serve others with hands, feet, brain, heart, and all the powers one possesses and on which others make demands. No one possesses any rights or privileges, or can possess them, but only endless and unlimited duties and obligations ; and the first and most undoubted of these duties is, to share in the struggle with nature to obtain support for one’s own life and that of others. . . . Other activities become legitimate only when this prime demand is satisfied. If a man living in solitude neglects to struggle with nature, he is at once punished by the fact that he perishes ; and if in a community man frees himself from that duty by making others, at the cost of their lives, do his work for him, he is at once punished by the fact that his life becomes unreasonable and unjustifiable.

‘At first, it seemed to me that to do rough manual work, some special arrangement or organisation was necessary : a circle of like-minded men, the consent of my family, or residence in the country. Then I felt ashamed to appear to wish to show off by doing such an unusual thing as physical work, and I did not know how to set about it.

‘But this was only just at first ; and on reflection I was surprised at the ease and simplicity with which all those questions, which had seemed to me so difficult and complex, solved themselves.

‘In reply to the question : What must I do ? I saw that the most indubitable answer was, first, do all the things I myself need—attend to my own *samovár*, heat

my own stove, fetch my water, attend to my clothes, and do all I can for myself. I thought this would seem strange to the servants; but it turned out that the strangeness only lasted for a week, and afterwards it would have seemed strange had I resumed my former habits.

‘To the question, Would it not absorb all my time and prevent my doing the mental work I love, to which I am accustomed, and which I sometimes consider useful? I received a most unexpected reply. The energy of my mental work increased, and increased in proportion to my bodily exertions.

‘It turned out that after devoting eight hours to physical toil (the half of the day I had formerly passed in hard struggles to avoid dulness) I still had eight hours left, of which I only needed five for mental work; and a calculation [here omitted for the sake of brevity] shows that had I, instead of devoting myself exclusively to literature, worked at it only on holidays, I could have written as much in fourteen years as I had actually written in forty.

‘I came upon a wonderful fact: a very simple arithmetical calculation, which a seven-year-old boy could have made, but which I never made before. There are 24 hours in the day; we sleep 8 hours; 16 remain. If a brain-worker devotes 5 hours every day to his work, he will get through an immense amount. What becomes of the other 11 hours?

‘It turned out that physical labour, far from rendering mental work impossible, improved and aided it.

‘But what about acquiring knowledge, and about intercourse and happiness? The more intense the work, and the nearer it approached to rough work on the land, the more enjoyment and information I obtained, and the more close and loving intercourse I had with men, and the more happiness life brought me.

‘What was the result of contributing a drop so insignifi-

cant in comparison with the ocean of my consumption? It turned out that I only needed to make physical labour the customary condition of my life, and most of my bad, expensive habits and requirements ceased of themselves, without the least effort on my part. Not to speak of the habit of turning day into night and *vice versá*, or the kind of clothes and the conventional cleanliness which became simply impossible and irksome when one was engaged on physical work, the quality of the food I needed changed completely. Instead of the delicacies that had formerly been attractive, the simplest food—black bread, buckwheat porridge, and cabbage-soup—now seemed nicest.

‘As to health, I was warned by leading medical authorities, that hard physical exertion at my age would injure my health; but the harder I worked, the stronger, fitter, happier and kindlier I felt.

‘When I came to understand the position it seemed to me ludicrous that by a long train of doubts and searchings, I should have reached the wonderful truth that man has eyes in order to see, legs in order to walk, and hands and a back in order to work; and that if he does not use them for their natural purpose, he will suffer for it. . . .

‘In the Krapívensky district [in which Yásnaya Polyána is situated] there wanders about a certain ragged peasant. During the war [Russo-Turkish, 1887-8] he was employed by a commissariat officer, to purchase grain. Having attached himself to this official, the peasant, it seems, went out of his mind with the idea that he, like the gentlefolk, need not work, but would receive his proper maintenance from the Emperor. He now calls himself the Most-Illustrious-Military-Prince Blohín, Contractor for Military Provisions of all Ranks. He says he has “completed all grades of the service,” and having finished the military profession, is to receive from the Emperor “an open bank, clothes, uniforms, horses, carriages, tea, peas, servants, and all provisions.”

‘In reply to the question : Would he not like to do some work ? he always replies proudly : “Many thanks ; that will all be performed by the peasants.”

‘When one says to him that the peasants also may not wish to work, he replies : “For the peasantry the performance of labour presents no difficulty.” (He always chooses grandiloquent words.) “There is now an invention of machinery for the facilitation of the peasants. For them it is not irksome.”

‘When one asks him what he lives for, he replies : “For passing the time.”

‘I always regard that man as a looking-glass. In him I see myself and our whole class.

‘To finish with a rank enabling one to live “for passing the time,” and to obtain an “open bank,” while the peasants work for us (as the invention of machinery makes work no longer irksome to them) is the complete formulation of the insensate creed of our circle.

‘When we ask : What then must we do ?—we do not mean really to ask anything, but merely affirm (only not with such directness as the Most-Illustrious-Military-Prince Blohín, who has finished all the grades and lost his reason) that we don’t want to do anything . . . though there is no end of work waiting to be done.

‘What is really needed is, to reject the criminal view that I am to eat and sleep merely for my pleasure ; and to adopt the simple and correct view, which the peasants grow up upon and hold, that man is primarily a machine, which has to be stoked with food, and that therefore it is shameful and oppressive and impossible to go on eating without doing any work.

‘If one only holds to that view, plenty of work will always be found, and it will be gladsome and satisfying to the needs of one’s soul and body.

‘The case presented itself to me like this. Our food divides our day into four “spells,” as the peasants term it :



(1) till breakfast, (2) till dinner, (3) till the evening meal, (4) the evening. Man's natural activity also divides itself into four kinds: (1) muscular activity—work of hand, foot, shoulder, and back—heavy work which makes one perspire; (2) the activity of one's fingers and wrists—activity showing one's craftsmanship; (3) activity of the intellect and imagination; (4) the activity of social intercourse. And the things man uses can also be divided into four classes: (1) the products of heavy labour—grain, cattle, buildings, wells, etc.; (2) the products of craftsmanship—clothes, boots, utensils, etc.; (3) the products of intellectual activity—science and art; and (4) the arrangements for intercourse with one's fellows—acquaintanceship, etc. And it seemed to me that the best thing would be to alternate the day's occupations, so as to exercise all four human capacities and re-create all four kinds of produce we consume, in such a way that the four spells would be devoted: the first, to heavy labour; the second, to intellectual work; the third, to craftsmanship; and the fourth, to social intercourse. It would be well could one arrange matters so; but if not, the one important thing is to retain a consciousness of the obligatoriness of work, and the obligatoriness of employing each one of the spells usefully. . . .

“But the subdivision of labour is more advantageous!”  
For whom is it more advantageous?

‘It is advantageous for the production of more cotton prints and more boots. But who makes those boots and prints?’

‘People such as those who for generations have made pin-heads and nothing else! Then how can it be more profitable for mankind?’

‘If the chief thing were to make as many prints and pins as possible, it would be all right; but the chief consideration is—the people and their welfare! And the welfare of people is in life; and their life is in their work.

Then how can compulsion to do tormenting, degrading, monotonous work be advantageous?

‘If the aim were the advantage of some men, regardless of the welfare of all, then the most advantageous thing might be for some men to eat others; and, it is said, they taste nice. But what is most profitable for all, is what I desire for myself: the greatest possible welfare and satisfaction of all those needs of body and soul and conscience and reason implanted within me. And, personally, I found that for my welfare and the satisfaction of these needs, I only had to be cured of the madness in which I—like the Krapivensky madman—lived, believing that gentlefolk ought not to work, and that all the work should be done by others. . . .

‘The solution of the terrible contradictions amid which we live is now before us.

‘The apparently insoluble question is the old one, of the exploitation by some of the labour of others; and in our time that question is expressed by property.

‘Formerly men took the labour of others simply by violence—slavery; in our day we do it by means of property.

‘Property to-day is the root of all evils: of the sufferings of those who possess it or are deprived of it, the reproaches of conscience of those who misuse it, and the danger of collision between those who have a superfluity and those who are in need.

‘States and Governments intrigue and go to war for property: the banks of the Rhine, land in Africa, China, or the Balkan Peninsula. Bankers, traders, manufacturers and landowners work, scheme, and torment themselves and others for property; officials and artisans struggle, cheat, oppress and suffer for the sake of property; our Law Courts and police defend property; and our penal settlements and prisons, and all the horrors of our so-called repression of crime, exist on account of property.

‘Property is the root of all evil; the division and safeguarding of property occupies the whole world.

‘What is property?

‘People are accustomed to think that property is something really belonging to a man. We say of a house and of one’s hand alike, that it is “my own” hand, “my own” house.

‘But evidently it is an error and a superstition to regard these things as belonging to one and the same category.

‘We know, or if we do not know, it is easy to discover, that property is merely a means of appropriating other people’s work. And the work of others can certainly not be my “property.” It has even nothing in common with the conception of property [that which is one’s own]—a conception which is very subtle and definite. Man always has called, and always will call, his own that which is subjected to his will and attached to his consciousness, namely, his own body.

‘Words always have a clear meaning till we intentionally give them a false one.

‘What then does property mean? Property is that which belongs to me alone and exclusively, that with which I can do just what I like; that which no one may take from me, that remains mine, and that I ought to use, increase and improve.

‘A man’s self—his physical and mental powers—is the only thing that is really his own property; yet it is from vain effort to make one’s own, things external to oneself and that cannot be one’s own,—and it is from the assumption that such things are our own “property,” *i.e.* our very own—that we have wars, executions, Courts of Law, prisons, luxury, vice, and murder. . . .

‘Things will be better when those in our circle, and, following them, the great majority of the workers, no longer consider that it is shameful to work at cleaning out

cesspools, but not shameful to fill them for others to clean; no longer consider it shameful to wear boots of their own make when they go to call on their neighbours, but not shameful to walk in boots and goloshes past people who have nothing on their feet; or that it is shameful not to know French or the latest news, but not shameful to eat bread without knowing how to make it; or that it is shameful not to wear a starched shirt and clean clothes, but that it is not shameful to wear clean clothes which prove one's idleness; or that it is shameful to have dirty hands, and not shameful not to have hard hands.

'It was only necessary, twenty-five years ago, to destroy the sophistry which justified serfdom, and public opinion as to what was praiseworthy and what was shameful changed, and life changed. It is now only necessary to destroy the sophistry which justifies the power money has over men, and public opinion about what is praiseworthy and what is shameful will change, and life will be changed. . . .

The time will soon come, it is already coming, when it will be shameful to wear on a workday, clothes, boots or gloves in which one cannot work; or to play on a piano costing £120 or even £5, while others have to work for us; or to feed a dog on milk and white bread, while there are people who have no bread and milk; and to burn lights except to work by, or to burn a fire on which no food is being cooked, while there are people who have no light or no fire. To such a view of life we are inevitably and rapidly approaching. We already stand on the brink of that new life, and to establish that new view of life is the task of public opinion, and such a public opinion is rapidly forming itself.

'It is women who form public opinion; and in our day women are particularly powerful.'

In the last chapter of the book Tolstoy states the view he held [1886] on woman's duty, and the fact that he

changed his mind a year or two later, does not deprive his statement of interest, for here—as all through the book—one is aware of the throb of his pulse, and feels he is speaking of things that had touched his own life, and were in question between his wife and himself. The last chapter, however, hardly forms an integral portion of the book, and I must summarise it very briefly.

Tolstoy says that women have hitherto been doing their duty better than men, and he proceeds to make this an argument for obedience to the primal law of 'bread-labour.'

'The general evasion of their duty by all men, would destroy mankind at once; the evasion of their duty by all women, would destroy mankind in the next generation; the evasion of their duty by some men and some women, does not destroy the race, but deprives the evaders of their rational nature as human beings.'

He adds that the evasion of his duty by man began long ago, whereas evasion of her duty by woman used to be almost unknown, except when it expressed itself in prostitution or abortion. Among the wealthy classes women continued to do their duty when men had ceased to perform theirs, and woman's influence naturally and rightly grew stronger. 'It is often said that women—Parisian women, usually childless and using all the arts of civilisation—have become so bewitching that they have mastered man by their fascinations. Just the reverse is the case. Not the childless woman has mastered man, but the mother who has done her duty.'

'The woman who artificially makes herself barren, and captivates man with her shoulders and curls, is not a woman ruling man, but a woman who, depraved by man, has descended to his level, abandoned her duty, and, like him, lost the reasonable meaning of her life.'

Then comes a scornful denunciation of 'that astonishing nonsense, called Woman's Rights.' Woman's real work is to bear children; not to imitate those men of the privileged

classes, who shirk real work, and substitute sham work in banks, ministries, universities, academies and studios.

‘Within my memory,’ says Tolstoy, ‘woman’s fall—her evasion of her duty—has begun, and within my memory it has been, and is being, more and more practised.

‘Woman, having forgotten her law, has believed that her strength lies in the fascination of her allurements, or in her dexterity in imitating the sham work done by man.

‘Children are a hindrance to both these things. And so, with the help of science (science is always ready to do anything nasty) within my recollection it has come about that among the wealthy classes a dozen ways of preventing conception have appeared, and customary appliances of the toilet have become tools for producing sterility. . . .

‘Every woman, however she may dress herself and however she may call herself, and however refined she may be, who refrains from childbirth without refraining from sexual relations, is a whore. And however fallen a woman may be, if she intentionally devotes herself to bearing children, she performs the best and highest service in life—fulfils the will of God—and no one ranks above her.

‘If you are such a woman, you will not, either after two or after twenty children, say that you have borne enough, any more than a fifty-year-old workman will say he has worked enough, while he still eats and sleeps and has muscles demanding work. If you are such a woman, you will not abandon the feeding and tending of your children to a stranger. The woman who performs her duty in spite of weariness, with effort, and risk to health and life, will apply a similar standard to the lives of her menfolk, and will demand that they too shall do real work, producing food and the necessities of life. She will encourage her husband to do such work, and by the performance of such work will measure and reckon a man’s worth, and for such work she will prepare her sons. A

real mother will suffer if she sees her child overfed, effeminate and dressed-up; for she knows that these things make it difficult for him to fulfil the will of God and do his duty.

‘Let no one say that such a view of life is impossible for a mother, she being too intimately bound by love to her children to refuse them dainties, amusement, and fine clothes, and not to fear to leave them unprovided for if her husband has no property or assured position. That is all glaringly untrue.

‘A true mother would never say it. You cannot refrain from the desire to give meat and toys, and to take the children to the circus?

‘But you do not give them poisonous berries to eat, do not let them go out alone in a boat, and do not take them to *cafés chantants*! How is it you can refrain in the one case, but not in the other? . . . A real mother knows that children—the next generation—are the greatest and most sacred thing it is given to man to see, and to serve that holy thing with her whole being, is her life.’

The book closes with a panegyric of the fruitful mother, who knows that real life is a matter of danger and effort and self-sacrifice; and who will guide humanity in the path of duty, service, and unselfishness.

*What Then Must We Do?* is a work of first-rate importance, because of the frankness and freshness with which it treats the most pressing practical problem of our time—that of poverty—about which the Churches, Chapels and Political Parties have been so strangely impotent and dumb.

Tolstoy's indictment: that masked slavery exists among us, and that we tolerate the existence of a caste of the ever-feasting, and hold in bondage a caste of the underfed but ever-working—is unanswerably true. His feeling

that this is unendurable, is one which grows stronger and reaches more people every year; and probably no modern book has done more than *What Then Must We Do?* to make it prevail. It inspires the feeling not merely that these things must be ended, but also that the greatest and most inspiring work a man can do, is to help to end them.

But how? Tolstoy has seen the facts of poverty acutely, described them vividly, and conveyed his feeling of moral condemnation strongly; but has he found the true key to the enigma? I think not. His prescription is, that all should live barely, all should work hard at 'bread-labour,' and there should be no Government using physical force to hinder any man from doing what he likes. His ideal life is that realised by some of the best Russian country peasants, when least interfered with by Government. In his condemnation of wealth, and especially of money as the symbol of wealth, his teaching reminds one of the New Testament, of St. Francis of Assisi, and of the views held by many of the Ancient, Medieval and Oriental saints and sages; but he takes no account of the Modern thought of the Western world, and after spending some years in testing the matter practically and theoretically, I find myself not in accord with him in as far as he ignores or totally condemns what the Western world has done during the last 150 years.

To an extent never before accomplished, we have mastered the brute forces of Nature and brought them into subjection to man, making them lift his heavy loads and render his work more profitable. No doubt man's motives in his fight with Nature have been mixed, and often selfish. No doubt the distribution of the gain is very unfair. No doubt, while organising labour and making it tenfold and a hundredfold more fruitful, we have introduced into our factory-system evils which did not previously exist, and which justify a scathing indictment. But when all is said, I refuse to condemn utterly



the work that has been accomplished ; for I feel that to thrust aside the whole Industrial Revolution as an unmixed evil, would be both unreasonable and ungrateful to those who, from Stephenson to Kelvin and from Robert Owen to Stilwell, have brought courage, perseverance, endurance, steadfastness, ingenuity, genius, ay, and often an earnest desire to serve their race, to the achievement of the task of rendering the conditions of life on this planet less hard. The Industrial Revolution has produced results which are neither all good nor all bad. It has made it possible for man to produce with comparative ease and rapidity more than is needed to ensure a decent subsistence for all ; though we have not yet ensured that all shall have a chance to enjoy this sufficiency, nor, as yet, saved every child from the risk of going hungry to school, nor ensured care for every sick man, and leisure and sustenance for every mother while she bears and suckles the future workers of our race ; nor have we, as yet, safeguarded every feeble member of the body politic from being crushed by demands beyond his strength. But we have accomplished a large part of a great and difficult task. We have harnessed the waterfalls, cut canals, and built railways. Steam is our servant, and electricity our handmaid. Vessels cross the ocean with greater facility than the coaches of our forefathers crossed the continents ; and the task before us of arranging the possession of the natural resources of the world, and regulating the distribution of its wealth so that poverty may no longer exist, is more nearly within our reach than the prevention of the devastation of the Black Danes or the extinction of the Plague or the Black Death were within the reach of our ancestors.

It is true that that splendid achievement can only be accomplished if men desire it ; and we are deeply indebted to Tolstoy for the spiritual impulse he has given towards the abolition of poverty, and for the breath of heroic resolve which breathes through his book and is so in-

estimably valuable in this great emprise. But we cannot consent to abandon, even at his call, the material achievements which have made the remainder of our task not merely possible but comparatively easy.

He is indeed strangely ignorant of industrial and commercial matters, and his ignorance finds an ally in his ethical arrogance: his readiness ruthlessly to condemn the achievements of those whose work has been remote from his own experience, and to impute base motives to men and movements he knows almost nothing of. His tendency to over-simplification is, again, a grave defect. To understand the complex phenomena of the transition period in which we live, requires much patience, tolerance, and balance, as well as a sense of the evolutionary growth of things—all of which are foreign to his drastic and cataclysmic way of dealing with life's problems.

He will not admit that the utilisation of the power of Government for the systematic organisation of society may be part of our effort after righteousness. To his mind the two things are antagonistic. I disagree; but that does not blind me to the fact that what he says holds a part of the truth. No Governmental interference and no organisation of society will avail, unless we can secure that devotion to duty, that thirst after righteousness, and that sense of dependence on something greater than ourselves, which Tolstoy has done so much to arouse. Unless we can draw into the service of the State people of a higher and finer type than many of the present prison and workhouse officials, no rearrangement of external forms will be of much avail. I hope, however, that improvements of organisation will help the growth of a sense that service—even though it be paid official service—to the least of our brethren, is service to the Highest. The change of heart and mind at which Tolstoy aims, must go on among public servants *pari passu* with improvements in the organisations they have to administer.

While dissenting from certain conclusions, I do not overlook the value of Tolstoy's work. It is most true, for instance, that a man's account with humanity should be credited with what he produces and what service he renders, but debited with all he consumes and all the service he accepts. It is true, too, as he says, that 'to make a pipe of oneself' for money to flow through, as is done by the unproductive rich, is a poor way of spending one's life, even if the fertilising stream be conveyed to where it is most needed; while if it be not so conveyed, the 'pipes' are merely a nuisance. Tolstoy, again, does excellently by claiming for the manual labourer the honour due to him, and a fair share of the benefits of art and science. What, finally, can be sounder than his contention that the greatest joy of life comes from spending oneself in a noble cause? Even in games (as every chess- or tennis-player knows) the keenest satisfaction comes from strenuous exertion; and this is still more so in real affairs. He who shirks the stress and strain of life's battle, inevitably misses the best that life can give.

But Tolstoy errs, where many noble minds have erred before him. He sees a great evil; is indignant and impatient, and jumps at a remedy insufficiently tried: a remedy that does not succeed, but fails whenever put to the test. Again and again, attempts have been made to cure social ills by persuading people to stand aside from the main stream of human life, and to save their souls by following some isolated course; but all paths of social improvement, except the common highway trodden by the common man, have proved to be blind alleys. It was so with the Early Christian Commune, of which, after a couple of mentions in the Acts, we hear no more. It was so with the great Franciscan movement, which, within a century-and-a-half of the death of its noble founder, had produced such a multitude of idle and inefficient wanderers living on the toil of those who were doing settled work, that

Wyclif was driven to declare that 'the man who gives alms to a begging friar, is *ipso facto* excommunicate.' It has been so in the Tolstoy movement also, for not one single Colony or Group formed under the influence of his writings, either in Russia or elsewhere in Europe, or in America, has been able to hold to his principles and show a satisfactory record. Nor is this strange; for we are in truth 'members one of another,' and it is not by separating oneself from the common mass that we can make life better. In practice it turns out that the man who refuses to specialise—refuses, that is to say, to do chiefly the things that he can do best—lives what is really an unnatural life. What, in addition to good intentions, humanity needs for the due ordering of its common life, is, above all, intelligence, efficiency, reliability, and power of organisation and co-operation. If men possessed of these qualities stood aside from politics, trade and industry, in order to make and do all the things they themselves require, the result would be deplorable. The task of the efficient organiser—and he is one of the most valuable of men—is to get good work well done with as little waste, confusion, toil or contention as possible. To effect this, the co-operation of many people, living in different countries, speaking different languages, and having different customs, is often needed; and to make such co-operation possible, the definiteness of legal enactments, and the impartial arbitrage of law, are, as I said before, essential. Yet these are things Tolstoy strenuously condemns. If, for thousands of years, humanity has gone so utterly wrong that we must abandon all our beaten tracks and adopt ways of life which never succeed, and which whenever tried immediately create friction and bitterness, the case is lamentable indeed.

Tolstoy grudges the specialist his training, for fear that—after we have spent much upon him—he may never do any work really useful to the mass of mankind. But

that is the sort of risk we have to run. To get men to sit still and think, before acting, is more important than to spur them to hasty action; and it is not by assuring the thinker that he is a useless parasite, that one encourages him to render the best service of which he is capable.

Tolstoy, however, is no slave to his own utterances; and one can find in his works passages which practically admit a large part of what I here contend for.

Much confusion has been caused by his denunciations of money: for he has omitted to explain in how far he considers the actual coins which serve as a medium of exchange, more objectionable than the wealth they represent. I remember how much amusement was caused by the conduct of one of his closest followers, a man of means, and active in business connected with the spread of Tolstoy's views, who ceased to use money, but allowed his wife to sign his cheques and his secretary to accompany him to the station to buy him railway tickets. Naturally the Philistines rejoiced, and declared the man to be a humbug; whereas he was really sincere, and merely mistaken.

Tolstoy himself was never guilty of such absurdities; but I think he showed a lack of lucidity when he wished to rid himself of property, while still continuing to eat. For I take it that a man most effectively makes a thing his own, when he eats it; and I fail to see that the evil is lessened by insisting that other people must have the trouble, and bear the guilt, of owning the land, and the food-stuffs, fuel, stove and utensils that are required before his food can be ready for him to eat. Property must be possessed by some one, or by some corporate body, unless endless confusion is to ensue; and guilt attaches not to the possession, but to the misuse, of property. Tolstoy says: 'Consume as little as possible'; but would it not be better to say: 'Consume only what adds to your efficiency'? For there are cases in which a large consump-

tion enables a man to hand over to humanity benefits exceeding the amount he has consumed—whether on his training, instruments, books, or laboratory. I hardly need argue the matter: it is one on which the Western world has made up its mind; and it is more to the point for us to remember the unpopular truths Tolstoy has uttered, than to dwell on his economic fallacies; and all who are interested in the right ordering of society, and care to use Tolstoy's works as a quarry, will find in them veins of richest ore, which need only be separated from the sands of irrelevant error for their value to be plainly manifest.

## AUTHORITY FOR CHAPTER VII

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## CHAPTER VIII

### A STRENUOUS YEAR

[1886] Co-operation with Gay. Tolstoy and Rubinstein. Death of Alexéy. Walk from Moscow to Yásnaya. *Nicholas Stick*. Letter to Gay. *Déroulède* and *revanche*. M. A. Stahóvitch. 'Domestic persecutions.' Tolstoy as builder. 'Don't look down!' Stories for the Mediator. *The Imp and the Crust*, *Iván the Fool*, etc. Popular Calendar. *The Death of Iván Ilyitch*. Ulcer on foot and operation. *The Power of Darkness*: prohibited; privately performed. Reception of Play abroad and in Russia. Letters to Gay. *The First Distiller*. How to write a story. Tolstoy Colonies. Non-Resistance.

EARLY in 1886 Gay stayed with Tolstoy in Moscow. Besides illustrating some of Tolstoy's short stories, Gay, 1886 inspired by *The Gospel in Brief*, produced a series of sketches (subsequently published by the Mediator) illustrating the life and teachings of Jesus. This co-operation of pen and pencil gave both men great satisfaction. Feinermann tells us:

Leo Nikoláyevitch loved the late artist Gay with an unusually warm, tender, and brotherly affection.

'Will you believe me,' Leo Nikólayevitch said,—'when he sits by me and lays his head on my shoulder and tremblingly strokes my hand, such a gentle feeling of nearness comes to me from him, and I am so pained and vexed with myself for not being at all worthy of his love, that I long to be better, greater, higher. . . . How well he discerns the invisible windings of the soul, and how inimitably, in any work, he feels the things that escape other people and remain dim and obscure even to

the author. I have myself experienced it, and notice it in his illustrations to my stories. . . . Now he has started illustrating the Gospels. He has shown me his first sketches. He uses charcoal and draws with wonderful rapidity. He has drawn Christ on his return from the wilderness overcoming the temptations. The Gospel story says: "And Jesus returned in the strength of the spirit." You should see the face that expresses the strength of the spirit! I could not tear myself away from it. It seemed luminous, and its rays penetrated my soul. That is Christ! Each artist represents him differently, but none has given the impression of his true majesty, and of the all-conquering power with which he captivated every heart and transformed his followers and disciples. Gay shows it all!

And Gay, speaking of Tolstoy, said:

'He—of course you know whom I mean, because there is only one *he* for me: our dear, priceless, and holy Leo Nikoláyevitch!—has kindled new life in me, and opened before me a vision of Truth's field. And I wish to repay him. I wish to interpret his teaching. He with his pen, I with my brush. I am only anxious not to repeat, but to complete him—to represent what cannot be expressed in words. It is difficult to follow such a master of language; but, to my great joy, the work progresses.'

Gay was loved by the whole Tolstoy family. He helped and taught the eldest daughter, Tatiána, who was studying painting at the Moscow School of Art; and we find the Countess as well as her daughters writing to him affectionately.

At this time Anton Rubinstein, whom Tolstoy greatly admired, and ranked above all the pianists he had heard, was giving one of his last concerts in Moscow, and Tolstoy was torn by conflicting emotions. On the one hand he knew he would intensely enjoy hearing Rubinstein play; but on the other hand, according to his theory of art, Rubinstein was not a representative of good, universally comprehensible art, and therefore Tolstoy did not want to



take a ticket for his concert. Nevertheless, when N. Káshkin visited Tolstoy on the eve of the performance, the latter expressed keen regret that he was again going to miss hearing Rubinstein; for tickets were by that time quite unobtainable.

Káshkin replied that for such an auditor as Tolstoy, a place could always be found, and offered to procure him a ticket.

Tolstoy was delighted, and thanked him warmly; and Rubinstein, when he heard of the case, gave instructions to have a place arranged for Tolstoy, and himself sent him a ticket. The latter, however, did not turn up. He had been very pleased to receive the ticket, and had actually put on his overcoat to go to the concert, when suddenly doubts assailed him as to whether he ought to do so. These doubts brought on a nervous attack, so severe that a doctor had to be called in.

Subsequently, Rubinstein offered to pay Tolstoy a visit and play for him, but owing to the death of little Alexéy this project was abandoned.

Of Tolstoy's relation to music, and referring especially to the criticisms of Beethoven and other celebrated composers that occur in his works, Káshkin remarks:

From my personal observation I came to the conclusion that Count Tolstoy really esteems Beethoven very highly, and is able deeply to enjoy very many of his pieces. He happened once to speak about Schumann to me, and referred to him quite disapprovingly, not admitting that he had any merit. But in this case also, I became convinced that in reality Leo Nikoláye-vitch not only can, but does, value that composer's work. I happened to be present once at a Musical Evening at Tolstoy's, at which among other things Schumann's Quartet for the piano was well played. The Count stood at the end of the room all the time, listening very attentively; and when the Quartet was ended, he came up to me and, in a voice quivering with excitement, said: 'To my shame, I must acknowledge that till now I did not know that excellent work. . . .'

For me, all the contradictions in Count Tolstoy's judgments on music seem quite clear. I explain them by that struggle between the artist and the moral philosopher, which continually went on within him. The contradictions are the result of his effort to be sincere always and in everything. That sincerity compels him sometimes to express quite contradictory judgments about art, according to whether he is approaching it from the point of view of a moral philosopher, or expresses the immediate impression it produces on his profoundly sensitive nature.

In the early spring of 1886 Tolstoy moved to Yásnaya, but on this, as on several subsequent occasions, his disapproval of railways, his desire not to use money, his love of outdoor exercise, and his wish to be in touch with the life of the people, made him prefer to walk the 130 miles from Moscow to Yásnaya. Anna Seuron, who saw him start on the journey, tells us :

The Count set out for Yásnaya on foot. He prepared for the journey in the following way : over his shoulder he took a linen sack for his food, and in it he also took a pair of broad shoes, a soft shirt, two pairs of socks, some handkerchiefs, and a small vial of stomach-drops, as he often suffers from indigestion. He also took a note-book with a pencil tied to it, in order to jot down anything of interest during the journey. He started, accompanied by three young men : of whom two belonged to very good families and the third was a son of the artist Gay. The two young aristocrats broke down on the road, and only the Count and Gay,<sup>1</sup> after sleeping in hovels, reached their destination on the third day. No one recognised the Count, and this afforded him great pleasure.

Feinermann, who saw him arrive at Yásnaya, says ;

In the first week after Easter, two pilgrims in bast-shoes, carrying sacks on their backs, entered the gates of the Yásnaya Polyána park. Both were lively and merry, with faces tanned

<sup>1</sup> Anna Seuron adds : 'without a farthing, begging their way,' but the Countess has struck that out and says, 'Not true.'

by sun and wind; and they breathed satisfaction, and a glad consciousness of something well done.

One of these pilgrims was Leo Nikoláyevitch, and the other was young Gay.

'I never enjoyed anything so much,' said Tolstoy. . . . 'To be among the people, sleeping, eating and talking with them. . . . Ah, what a story I heard about "Nicholas Stick" [Nicholas I] from a lisping, dear old man of over ninety, who lay on the stove with me in a village near Sérpouhof! With what artistic warmth he described the horrors of those terrible times, of which I witnessed just the end!

"In those days, when they took down a man's breeches, they never gave him as little as fifty strokes," said he; "and not a week passed without one or two men in the regiment being flogged to death. One was always hearing: 'The stick! the stick!' . . . two hundred, three hundred strokes at a time, and more!"

Three days later Tolstoy's powerful sketch, *Nicholas Stick*, was ready, but neither the subject nor the title was such as the Censor could be expected to pass.

Another writer has told the story of a hectographed edition of *Nicholas Stick*. The notorious *agent-provocateur* Zoubátov, who was then posing as a Revolutionary, got on the track of M. N., who had issued it:

Soon M. N. was arrested. His mother was terribly upset, and with tears in her eyes begged me to go to Tolstoy and ask him, if questioned, to say that the pamphlet had been published with his consent. I knew this was not so: M. N. had written to ask Tolstoy's permission, but not receiving a reply, had issued the booklet without waiting for it. It was a difficult commission to execute, but I went to Tolstoy and told him of M. N.'s mother's request. With great gentleness and tact he hastened to remove my uneasiness. 'Of course it was with my consent,' said he; 'I am always pleased when my works obtain circulation. Tell his mother that I shall say so, if I am asked!'

A few days later Tolstoy was requested to call on Prince

Dolgoróuky, Governor-General of Moscow. He replied that he had nothing to do with that gentleman, who, if he wanted to see him, had better come to him. Dolgoróuky did not do so, but sent his Adjutant, a young man, to reprove and warn the author. This emissary was amiably received, like any other visitor; but during the whole interview Tolstoy talked to him about the immorality of his position in the service of such a Government!

The difficult problem of how to shape his own life, and how to influence the lives around him, still continued to occupy Tolstoy's thoughts; but the harsh strenuousness noticeable in the first years of his propaganda gradually mellowed. A glimpse of this change shows itself in a letter of 21st May, addressed to Gay:

I am glad that all is well with you, and that you are at *your own work*. It is good to mow and plough, but there is nothing better than to be of use to people while at one's own trade. . . .

We have moved to the country. I am up to my neck in work, and am glad of it. I allow myself to hope it is not useless. I am writing a continuation of *What Then Must We Do?* and booklets for the people. Of works begun, but which I have not time to touch, there is a heap. Regarding your life—mine and yours (I think of yours, with all your family, and the different trends in it)—one's head whirls when one begins to think what will happen, and how to arrange everything. But one need only approach the matter with the thought, 'What can I best do for A, for B, and for C, with whom I come in contact?' and all the difficulties are swept away like cobwebs, and everything fits together better than one could have imagined. 'Seek the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, and the rest will be added unto you'; but we begin by seeking the things that should be added. And then one fails to get it (for it is granted only as a result of seeking the kingdom) and one loses the kingdom as well. You know that; but how good it would be if every one knew it, and knew that this is not a matter of fine words, but the most practical of practical rules.

I know it by experience. One acts *au jour le jour*, trying not to do harm; and suddenly, how great and good and kindly and pleasant a thing has sprung up!

Connoisseurs of literary art were at this time bewailing Tolstoy's absorption in matters non-artistic. But the world in general had become interested in him, just because he cared for the great problems of religion and duty in relation to property, and dared to be frank, and strove to be intelligible. One sign of his increasing renown was the frequency with which foreigners as well as Russians began to apply for permission to visit Yásnaya Polyána, and sought to secure his advocacy for this or that scheme they were interested in. It was, for instance, at this time that George Kennan, on his return from Siberia, visited him.

One day out mowing, when Tolstoy and his fellow-workers had abandoned their scythes and settled down to lunch, his nine- and seven-year-old sons, Andréy and Michael, came running to tell him that a foreigner had arrived at the house. This visitor turned out to be Déroulède, the French soldier-poet-patriot, who had come to Russia to promote an alliance hostile to Germany, and to secure revenge for '71 and the restoration of Alsace-Lorraine to France. Needless to say, he got scant encouragement from the author of *The Gospel in Brief*. Anna Seuron says :

No one knew who that tall man of military appearance, in a long grey coat buttoned all the way down, was, whom a relation of the Count's brought to Yásnaya one day.

Déroulède! The name sounded quite strange; for newspapers were very seldom read here. There had even been a time when they were completely banished! Newspaper reading takes time, and stupefies and perverts people. Of course the news of any great event found its way here; but, generally speaking, nobody knew, or cared to know, the details of what was going on in the world.

Déroulède was voluble, affable, and quick to adjust himself to the situation :

War and revenge, and arguments *pro* and *contra*, were Chinese literature to the Count, and a single twitch of his lips, and a single flash from his steel eyes, were enough for Déroulède to understand that he must give some other explanation of his visit than his desire to ally Russia with France for a war of revenge ; and he fell back on his ardent desire ' to make the acquaintance of Russia's literary luminary.'

Only on those terms was it possible for him to remain three days at Yásnaya. No doubt he hoped one way or other to return to his theme of *revanche*, but every time he attempted it, the Count's face turned to stone.

Only once did the Count condescend to expatiate on the horrors of war. He himself, under a night sky, had seen on a battlefield thousands of motionless, glazed-eyed corpses, which looked as though they were demanding an account from those who had sent them to premature death. And when Déroulède announced that ' the Rhine must belong to the French,' the Count merely smiled and said : ' Not with blood should the frontiers of a country be drawn, but by reasonable agreement, allowing just advantage to both sides.' Déroulède remarked that war is implanted in the very nature of man. The Count replied that ' War should, and could, be avoided ; and the chief thing is that there should not be men willing to evoke and provoke it' ; and thereupon he rose and left the room with rapid steps.

Tolstoy himself narrates that on one occasion, in a fit of exasperation, he ran out of the room, slamming the door violently behind him—which did not prevent Déroulède, when next they met, from renewing his propaganda of *revanche* as if nothing had happened. At last Tolstoy proposed to his visitor that they should lay before an ordinary, typical peasant the plan that the French and the Russians, being on each side of the Germans, should unite to squeeze the juice out of them. On the matter being explained to him, the peasant, after scratching his head, replied that he

thought the Frenchmen and the Russians had better first do some useful work, and then go off together to the inn for a drink, and take the Germans with them !

That evening Déroulède departed, hopeless of converting Tolstoy to the belief that the best use he could make of his powers would be to persuade people to kill one another ; for the Russian writer stoutly maintained that the real danger of war lay in the pestilent, patriotic superstitions of men such as Déroulède, who, having no useful work to do, and no belief in God, invent for themselves spurious excitements and false enthusiasms.

Among the frequent visitors at Yásnaya was young M. A. Stahóvitch, who subsequently played a part in the Constitutional freedom movement in Russia. Feinermann tells us that :

The whole family loved young Michael Alexándrovitch Stahóvitch, and his visits always gave occasion for noisy undertakings—hunts, drives, and games.

Of good figure, with a budding beard and a cordial kindly smile on his face, he was the heart and soul of all such affairs, and was the special friend of Leo Lvóvitch [the third son], who was also a great expert in sports and merry-making.

Leo Nikoláyevitch could not see their lively, healthy faces without emotion, but became affected by their merry mood, and would start racing with them along the long birch avenue, and was very, very pleased when he managed to forge ahead, overtaking any of the runners.

‘ Grasshoppers ! ’ he would say triumphantly, ‘ where would you have been, twenty years ago ? Then I would have shown you how to run ! Not by spurting, but by lasting, one has to do it ; but you, guttapercha images, try to gallop ! We ’ll see what prizes you ’ll take in life’s race—also by galloping and spurting, I suppose ? ’

And the talk would suddenly take a serious and didactic turn, touching on the great themes of life, the duty of work, and of association with the people.

Young Stahóvitch would become all attention ; and thought-

ful, with knit brows, still breathing deeply from his exertions, would eagerly drink-in the master's words.

He had a really filial affection for Tolstoy.

'I should be glad to, Count! My dearest dream is to live with the people!' said he sincerely.

And with prayerlike reverence he used to come out into the fields, and with inexperienced hands take the smooth handles of the *sohá* [peasant-plough] and anxiously try to cut a straight furrow.

Eventually he learnt to plough and mow and load the hay on the carts.

A passionate desire to live with the people and like the people seized almost all the members of Tolstoy's family at that time. Even the Countess Sophia Andréyevna, who had long resisted rough manual labour and every attempt at simplification, came to the haymaking, wearing a homespun peasant-skirt, and raked the fresh and fragrant hay.

And when the more ardent members of the family began to arrange to carry out their wish and live among the peasants in the village, young Stahóvitch threw himself into the plan with his whole soul.

'We have already chosen the huts and everything!' said he joyfully, burning with enthusiasm, and imagining how good and how great it would be, to know that one was on an equality with millions of others—doing the one great and important work which supports life and feeds mankind.

'We shall go to bed early, rise early, meet the sun without blushing, and look men straight in the eyes without feeling ashamed, for we too shall be workers. How inexpressible a blessing that will be!'

But the Countess heard of the plan; and at tea, when all had come together after work, there was a stormy scene. She began sharply to condemn the scheme:

'It shall not be!' she firmly announced, addressing her children. 'You were born Counts, and Counts you shall remain!'

That scene depressed us all, and we afterwards talked all the evening on the theme that, 'a man's enemies are those of his own household. . . .'

I remember that Tolstoy that evening said that opposition



from relatives gave an indication of the measure of a man's readiness to serve the truth.

'It means that there is in us something that renders it possible for others to suspect us of being insincere people playing at simplification. Only because they see this something, do they raise their voices against the undertaking which threatens to undermine their accustomed ways of life. If, but for a moment, they saw that we really could not endure this life of landlordising, that it stifles us, sickens us, and that we should die if we did not change our life,—believe me they would not find a word to say against you. They would not dare to, and would submit to you without a murmur, as you, probably, will now uncomplainingly submit to them. It is only on that subtle instinct which discerns with wonderful exactitude the weak spot in another's soul, that the world's whole attack on those who seek the truth, rests. And that attack will continue till we believe in the truth as sincerely as they believe in falsehoods. It all depends on that. That is the only conquering strength.'

It was about this time that Danilevsky visited Tolstoy, who took him for a 'little walk' which lasted three-and-a-half hours.

To him, Tolstoy spoke of Tourguénef and gave what may be considered his final verdict on that writer in the words :

He was to the end of his life an independent, inquiring spirit. . . . He was a genuine, self-reliant artist, never lowering himself consciously to serve the passing demand of the moment. He may have gone astray, but even in his errors he was sincere.

Of manual labour, Tolstoy said :

What a delight it is to rest from intellectual occupations by means of simple physical labour ! Every day, according to the season I either dig the ground, or saw and chop wood, or work with scythe, sickle, or some other instrument. As to ploughing, you cannot conceive what a satisfaction it is to plough. . . . It is not very hard work, as many people suppose ;

it is pure enjoyment! You go along, lifting up and properly directing the plough, and you don't notice how one, two, or three hours go by. The blood runs merrily through your veins; your head becomes clear; you don't feel the weight of your feet; and the appetite afterwards, and the sleep! . . .

For me, daily exercise and physical labour are as indispensable as the air. In summer in the country, I have plenty of choice. I can plough, or cut grass; but in the autumn in rainy weather it is wretched. In the country there are no sidewalks or pavements, so when it rains I cobble and make shoes. In town, too, I am bored by simple walking, and I cannot plough or mow there; so I saw or split wood. Sedentary intellectual work, without physical exercise and labour, is a real calamity. If for a single day I do not walk, or work with my legs and hands, I am good for nothing by evening. I can't read or write, or even listen to any one with attention; my head whirls; there seem to be stars in my eyes, and I have a sleepless night.

And here is Feinermann's sketch of Tolstoy at work:

The barn of Widow Anísyá, whom Tolstoy used often to help, collapsed, and a new one had to be built.

'We'll do it,' said Leo Nikoláyevitch consolingly, and set to work to prepare timber for the walls and roof.

He himself felled aspens of different sizes in the forest; and when they were all carted, stripped and smoothed them with axe and plane. We dug holes and put up the uprights. Our chief instructor was neighbour Prokófey, a wise, practical peasant who knew every kind of peasant work.

As long as the work was on the ground—digging, preparing the rafters, etc.—Leo Nikoláyevitch was always first, and worked from morn to night. With sleeves tucked up, he sat astride a beam in a workmanlike manner, and was very pleased when Prokófey came round and ejaculated:

'Take pains! Take pains. . . . You'll do.'

'I am taking pains!' Leo Nikoláyevitch would reply with a smile.

In a week's time the walls were up and the rafters fixed, and the time came to peg the fourteen-foot cross-poles,

between which hazel twigs would have to be twined, so that, when the roof was thatched, each sheaf could be firmly tied on with ropes of straw. The poles had therefore to be fixed pretty near together, and secured firmly with large wooden pegs.

But to drive in those pegs, it was necessary first to bore a hole through the pole and the rafter, and then to drive in the peg. It was this boring which Leo Nikoláyevitch found most difficult.

He managed somehow to bore a hole through the first pole, at the lower end of the roof; and standing on a ladder and often steadying himself with one hand, he managed to drive in the peg; but when he came to the second pole, which could not be reached from the ladder, and he had to climb on to the rafter, Leo Nikoláyevitch could not at first make up his mind to do it.

‘Don’t be afraid! Look at me. . . .’ urged Prokófey.

Leo Nikoláyevitch climbed up and sat astride the rafter, but scarcely had he taken hold of the drill and bent back to adjust the point, when it dropped from his hands. He became giddy and swayed, and quickly crept down the ladder, holding on to the rafter.

‘No, I give it up! I shall never learn to do it!’

‘You wait a bit before running away. . . .’ Prokófey kept taunting him. ‘Time enough to turn tail! See me do it. . . .’

Leo Nikoláyevitch again climbed up and sat astride the rafter like Prokófey, but hardly had he stuck the point of the drill in, before he again began to sway, dropped the drill and, sliding sideways, reached the ladder and again got down.

‘No, I won’t!’ he said; ‘do it yourselves!’

Then Prokófey stopped his work and also got down, and taking Leo Nikoláyevitch’s hand, led him aside and said:

‘I know why you sway about on the rafter . . . you look down.’

‘That’s true,’ Leo Nikoláyevitch admitted.

‘Well, that won’t do! That’s what makes your head giddy. You must look up at your work, fix your eyes on the drill and the hole you are boring, and go on quietly twisting. Try it! You will see how easy it is!’

Leo Nikoláyevitch brightened up.

'That would be good; and perhaps you are right.'

Again he climbed up, again sat astride the rafter, took the drill, stuck in the point, and did not take his eyes from it. Turning the drill round and round, he bored a hole, and drove in the peg successfully.

His delight knew no bounds.

'I've got it! I've got it!' he shouted to Prokófey, and boldly mounting the next rafter, he began boring another hole.

That evening, when after fixing on the poles we were returning from work, Leo Nikoláyevitch said:

'You know, I have learnt more to-day than one sometimes learns in a year. Prokófey's remark was a small one, but how deep it goes! Only now do I understand fearlessness in other situations of life also.

'I remember with what surprise and boundless envy I used, during an artillery fight, to gaze at the work of those simple-minded gunners, who pointed and loaded the cannons with imperturbable calmness, as if a hail of projectiles were not thundering about their heads, and shells bursting around them and tearing horses and men to pieces. I did not understand the secret of their courage. I am not speaking of that deep, fundamental secret of entire submission to Him who called us into being: that is too distant, and cannot be evoked every time you approach and point the gun. What I did not then understand was another secret, that of simply adapting oneself, which helps one to hold out for hours in such a hell. Now I see that the secret is Prokófey's "Don't look down! Look at your work!" The gunner sees before him only the charge, the sight, and the muzzle; and so he can do his work.'

At this marvellously prolific time Tolstoy wrote several of his best tales for the people: *How Much Land Does a Man Need?*, *Ilyás*, *The Three Hermits*, and the excellent temperance story, *The Imp and the Crust*,<sup>1</sup> as well as one or two poorer stories drawn from medieval legends and Lives

<sup>1</sup> All contained in the volume entitled *Twenty-three Tales*.

of the Saints, and tinged with that suspiciousness of all that makes for material success and with that reliance on Divine interference in mundane affairs, which occasionally mingle with Tolstoy's usually rational outlook on life. I refer particularly to *The Godson*<sup>1</sup> and *The Candle*. The most remarkable of the series of short stories which he wrote this year was, however, *Iván the Fool*,<sup>2</sup> into which he compressed the essence of *What Then Must We Do?*

Of the writing of *Iván the Fool* we learn something from Feinermann, who was for a short time carrying on the village school at Yásnaya, and had evening Readings with the children, which were attended by some of the peasants. Tolstoy also came to those Readings:

He would sit on the edge of the last bench and listen. During the Reading or after it, an animated conversation would generally arise among the audience, and Leo Nikoláyevitch would often take a warm part in it.

He enjoyed this close intercourse with the people, and always got something new and elevating out of such conversations.

'How good it is!' he once said to me at parting. 'How little we know where true happiness lies! An hour of such intercourse is worth more than any number of Society evenings and routs.'

Once we had finished a short story, when Leo Nikoláyevitch drew a number of written sheets from his pocket and said:

'Now I'll read you something of my own. It is called A Fairy Tale'; and in a clear, distinct voice he read his famous story, *Iván the Fool*, and I noticed how reading to this audience the story that embodies his view of life, agitated him.

The story was well received.

The elders praised it, and the youngsters began to discuss the various incidents and to compare their impressions. . . .

Noticing one of the peasants who was particularly moved by the story, Leo Nikoláyevitch said to him:

<sup>1</sup> Contained in the volume entitled *Twenty-three Tales*.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

'Well now, Konstantín Nikoláyevitch, you might repeat the whole story to us! Be so kind as to try! . . .'

'Why not? I can repeat every word of it,' said the man, and began to tell it fluently. But to our surprise, it was not a repetition. His tale was far from completely corresponding to the original. Many parts came out quite differently. Both words and phrases were altered, and in one place even the sequence of events was changed.

The crowd began to interrupt, and sharply corrected him.

'Don't lie! It's this way! . . .'

But Leo Nikoláyevitch eagerly caught just these alterations, and stopped the interrupters:

'Don't stop him. . . . Let him tell it his own way. It comes out very well!'

The peasant narrator was the poorest man in the village, but had a remarkable gift of words and was very fond of reading.

Leo Nikoláyevitch took rapid notes, and beamed with enthusiasm whenever a vivid phrase, an apt example, or a happy turn of words occurred in the peasant's narration, and *Ivón the Fool* was published in the form Konstantín gave it.

'I always do that,' said Leo Nikoláyevitch. 'I learn how to write from them, and I test my work on them. That is the only way to produce stories for the people. My story, *God Sees the Truth*,<sup>1</sup> was also made that way. It was retold me by one of my pupils.'

Besides the help he got from peasants and schoolboys, Tolstoy also received literary assistance from peasant women. There was one old woman, named Anísya, from a neighbouring village, who used to come to see Tolstoy and tell him tales; and he used to be delighted both with her stories and her way of telling them, and would say: 'You are a real master, Anísya! Thank you for teaching me to speak Russian—and to think Russian!'

Another work done this year was the preparation of a popular Calendar with proverbs, in compiling which the

<sup>1</sup> Contained in the volume entitled *Twenty-three Tales*.

whole household assisted. Proverbs, recipes, advice on all sorts of subjects and for everybody, were adjusted to each day of the year. This Calendar found its way into very many peasant huts, and was subsequently enlarged and republished in another form.

Field work, visitors, correspondence, family matters, economic philippics, and stories for the people, did not suffice to exhaust Tolstoy's energies. His new faith seemed to quadruple his mental and moral strength, without impairing his physical powers. One is conscious, however, throughout the whole of the latter part of his life, of the struggle continually going on between his artistic nature—craving for opportunities to express itself in accustomed forms by producing works for the 'intelligents' (meaning, in the Russian sense, the educated portion of the population)—and that other side of his nature which disapproved of everything in which the peasants could not have an equal share. The result was, not that Tolstoy ceased to produce works of art, but that in his stories, novels, and plays of this period, his indictment of and dissatisfaction with the life of the middle and upper classes made itself constantly felt. He did not cease to be an artist, but the strong tendency that possessed him and that oozed from his every pore in correspondence and conversation, and showed itself in his dress, his occupations, and his diet, manifested itself also in his art work. To have suppressed it would have killed the artist in him: for it is the function of art to transmit feelings the artist has experienced,—and he would be a strange artist who, instead of transmitting his strongest feelings, suppressed them.

After *Anna Karénina*, the first distinctly artistic work Tolstoy produced, apart from his tales for the people, was *The Death of Iván Ilyitch*, a wonderful description of the life and painful death of a Judge, who, just at the very end of his fatal illness, realises the futility of his past life and

the joy of self-surrender for the sake of others. It was finished on 22nd March 1886.

I have already pointed out that in Tolstoy's later artistic works he makes what some one has called 'psychological experiments.' *Iván Ilyitch* is an example of this. Iván is, as it were, summoned before a moral Court, and accused of having lived 'a most ordinary life' which was at the same time 'most horrible.' The experiment of showing that his life was 'most ordinary' and 'most horrible' is carried through in masterly fashion; though Jacob Tonson in the *New Age* suggested recently that there is something wrong in the description of the illness Iván Ilyitch dies of. He takes quantities of opium, but does not exhibit the signs of it. I am not prepared to rebut this charge, for medicine and disease are things to which Tolstoy has paid little attention, and wide as is the range of his knowledge, his neglect of some subjects is almost as complete as his mastery of others. When during a recent visit I asked him whether he pleaded guilty to Tonson's charge, he laughed good-humouredly and replied, 'Probably.'

Before the summer of 1886 was over, Tolstoy himself was very seriously ill with erysipelas, resulting from a sore on his leg. In spite of the pain it gave him when ploughing, and in spite of remonstrances from the Countess, he long refused to pay any attention to this sore. But at last, realising the danger of further delay, the Countess pretended to have neuralgia and made this an excuse for going off to Moscow, where she persuaded an acquaintance, Dr. Tchírkof, to accompany her at once to Yásnaya. Owing to his dislike of doctors and medicine, Tolstoy received Tchírkof with great dissatisfaction. The latter mildly reproached him for disregarding in practice the law of love to one's neighbour which he professed, and after that, things went better, and the doctor was allowed to examine the ulcer which had formed on the patient's shin.



Tolstoy's temperature had risen to 104 degrees Fahrenheit, the leg was much swollen, and his life was in imminent danger. A drainage-tube had to be inserted immediately, and this proved to be a very painful operation.

Days of great suffering followed, till one by one the pieces of decayed bone had come away. When the pain was not too great, Tolstoy was the gentlest of patients; but at times he shrieked so that those in attendance were ready to run away. At such periods he longed for a doctor, and more than once a surgeon from Toúla had to be sent for during the night. The patient had to lie up for nine weeks, and for a month was not allowed to engage in any literary occupation.

Anna Seuron remarks that :

The Countess was an excellent nurse, especially during the early and most critical days; she was always in good spirits and extremely quick, perhaps even too quick, for when a man is seriously ill he prefers quiet movements.

During this illness Tolstoy produced a play. At first he dictated it to his wife, but when it became possible to move him on to a sofa, he demanded a writing-board, pen, and paper.

Anna Seuron says :

When their father wrote, the whole family went on tip-toe. Throwing his head back on the leather cushion, he often dropped his pencil, and his face expressed a double kind of suffering. He was creating the drama, *The Power of Darkness*.

That terrible play was founded on a case that had come before the Toúla Law Courts. It exhibits the worst side of peasant life : crime leading on to crime in a crescendo of horrors until, towards the end, in a very powerful scene, a drunken fellow, an ex-soldier, inspires Nikíta with courage; and in the last act, at a wedding and in the presence of a police-officer, Nikíta publicly confesses his misdeeds.

These scenes, when well rendered, entirely obliterate the impression of the sordid details that have gone before. We forget that the story deals with adultery, poison, and infanticide; only the impression of the repentance and confession remains.

The scene in the cellar, when Nikita crushes his child with a board so that its 'bones crackled,' was one Tolstoy himself could never read without tears.

Of this work he remarked to Feinermann :

When I am writing a novel I paint and, so to say, work with a brush. There I feel freer. When it comes out awkwardly I can change it, add colour, and amplify. But a drama is different; . . . it is sculptor's work. It has no shadows and half-tones. All must be clear-cut and in strong relief. The incidents must be ready, fully ripened, and the whole work lies in representing these fully-matured moments, these ripe moods of the characters. This is exceedingly difficult, especially when dealing with the life of peasants, which is a foreign land to us—another hemisphere!

In one of the scenes in this play—that between the little girl and the workman, Mítritch—the injustices of a peasant-woman's lot are forcibly expressed; but in this play, as in many of Tolstoy's later works, the women (Matryóna and Anísya) are depicted as being far worse than the men: of whom neither Peter, nor tipsy Mítritch, nor even Nikita himself, is fundamentally depraved.

From the time Tolstoy adopted an ascetic-religious view of life, he began explicitly to say—what he had previously only suggested—that women are morally as well as mentally inferior to men. Where evil occurs, *cherchez la femme*: she and her wiles are the cause of our moral degradation. It is the old formula, found alike in India, in Medieval Europe, in Old Russia, and elsewhere: woman, if not always a daughter of Hell, is at least the vessel of all temptation and evil. That view, though false as a generalisation, does not prevent Tolstoy's drama, or his

stories, from being effective: for what is not true universally, may be perfectly true of a particular case or group; and, after all, a play or a story deals not with humanity in general, but with particular people. Moreover, *The Power of Darkness* possesses in a remarkable degree all the qualities of a first-rate acting play. It has movement, life, and the clear-cut clash of wills, from which the actions appear to follow inevitably.

It is one of the most difficult of Tolstoy's works to translate, for he introduces the idiosyncrasies of peasants he knew personally, and contrasts their different ways of speech so strongly that it would never do to make them all speak uniformly good Cobbett English; yet there is an almost equal objection to the introduction of dialect; and any peculiarity of speech a translator may select to distinguish the characters from one another, is in danger of being taken for a dialect, and the objection raised that these Russian peasants did not live in Somerset or Suffolk.

While on the subject of the play, let me anticipate, and tell its fate.

In January 1887 we find Tolstoy writing: 'I have been writing my play. It has not yet appeared. It is at the Censor's.' That referred to the Press Censor, who passed it without much delay. It was with the Dramatic Censor that trouble began. He prohibited its public performance, and the veto was maintained throughout the reign of Alexander III. Not till 1895, when Nicholas II was on the throne, was its public performance in Russia permitted.

Why the Censor forbade it, no one knows. There is nothing political in it. It is one of the most moral plays ever written. The plain-speaking and coarseness which occur, are not things that usually trouble a Russian Censor, who is more concerned to maintain political 'well-intentionedness' than prudery. It had, however, become habitual to prohibit works by Tolstoy, as his writings

were known to be looked at askance by 'the highest personages.' In Russia as elsewhere, a Censor's chief business is to avoid getting himself into trouble; and when a work is out of the common, and influential people are known to object to it, his safest course is to prohibit it. That is why Censors are, in the nature of things, harmful to literature and the drama. They are sure to tolerate low things that commend themselves to the common, sensual man; but are very likely to prohibit things that are new and startlingly above him.

The play was, however, performed in private houses, where only personal friends of the hosts were admitted. It was given in this way in Petersburg by members of the highest aristocracy. Grand Dukes attended the performance.

It first saw the public footlights at Antoine's Théâtre Libre in Paris, on 22nd February 1888. Zola was enthusiastic about it, and took as much pains to secure its success as though it had been his own work. At one of the rehearsals he said: 'Above all, do not strike out a single scene or a single word, and do not fear for its success.'

The actors and actresses were amateurs. They threw themselves whole-heartedly into their work, and achieved such a triumph that *The Power of Darkness* was soon afterwards produced at no less than three Paris theatres. It was also performed all over Europe, and among its favourable critics were Dumas fils, Jules Lemaître, Sardou, and Augier.

In the winter of 1889-1890 it was given in Berlin by the 'Freie Bühnen' (which grew into the 'Freie Volksbühnen') and, like Ibsen's *Ghosts*, it profoundly influenced the Naturalist movement in Germany. Hauptmann's first efforts (*Before Sunrise* in particular) bear evidence of this.

Its first public performance in Russia took place on 16th October 1895, at the Souvórin'sky Theatre in Peters-

burg, and the impression produced was extraordinarily powerful. But when the play was presented at the Little Theatre in Moscow, a few weeks later, it was not equally successful. The actors and actresses had so long been accustomed to treat peasants merely as comic figures, and were so out of touch with village life, that they could not manage this grim peasant-play, and it missed its due effect. P. M. Ptchélnikof, who was then Manager of the Office of the State-subsidised Moscow Imperial Theatres, has told of the occasion on 23rd November 1895, when, reluctantly fulfilling a promise, Tolstoy read the play to the troupe who were rehearsing it :

Many of us thought that a great writer must also be a great reader. But when, after a short conversation, Tolstoy began to read his play, we had to admit that we were not listening to a platform reader. Moreover, one did not feel any animation in the reading, except some glimpse of it in the part of Akím, and in the part of Mítritch in the fifth Act. All the rest seemed crumpled up, and the reading was perfunctory. We specially noticed that Tolstoy hurried rapidly over the passages which abound in coarse peasant-expressions. When he came to the conversation about cesspools, he even seemed confused. On reading one phrase, he remarked that he would strike it out, as it might shock some ladies.

This play has been revived again and again all over Russia, with great success ; and it is recognised, both in that country and abroad, as a dramatic masterpiece.

Though it has been licensed by the Censor, and produced by the Stage Society in 1904, the play has never yet been publicly performed either in England or America.

It is, however, time to return from this digression. Tolstoy's life and feelings in 1886, as well as the relations between Gay and himself, are illustrated by the following extracts from his letters :

8 October 1886.

Somehow it seems to me that things have not been going quite well with you, and that you have therefore not done much work. God forbid that it be so! At our age nothing is so much to be desired as that the fruits that ripen in us should fall one after another softly to the ground in peace and sunshine, without storm or tempest; and here I stand under your tree, waiting. . . .

4 Nov.

All goes well with me. I am happy. God gives me too much. In our family the good seed is ripening, slowly but surely.

About the same time Mary Lvóvna wrote to Gay:

DEAR UNCLE,—Thanks for your letters. We have all received them and are glad of them. Papa has recovered and is working much; he is now writing a drama of peasant life, and is tremendously absorbed in it. . . . He has just come in, and says that in his play such a dreadful murder has occurred that he himself feels frightened while he writes it.

In the following month Tolstoy wrote:

9 Dec.

All goes well, but in life I try not to lose the consciousness of the nearness of death. I do not sleep properly, and therefore my nerves and head are weak and I cannot work at my writing. Another kind of internal, and partly external, work goes on—that of communion with God and man, of which I am conscious and glad.

18 Dec.

I am in Moscow, but, nevertheless, for the most part quite happy and tranquil; I lack nothing. I have so much work (which one hopes will be of use to people) that I know I cannot finish it all. It is so with you too, I know. And when one knows one cannot finish it, the desire for personal reward falls away, while the consciousness of performing a service remains. I sometimes experience that, and it is very good; but as soon as people begin to praise me (as now for my play) a desire for personal reward springs up, together with a stupid self-

satisfaction. Such I am! What is to be done? It is true that, as you also know, one is saved by the fact that one has no time to waste, and must begin something else.

In this year, 1886, besides the works already named, Tolstoy wrote some other short stories and a number of letter-essays, as well as a short article on Gay's drawing, *Christ's Last Talk with His Disciples*. He also dramatised *The Imp and the Crust*, under the title of *The First Distiller*.<sup>1</sup>

Near the Tolstoys' house in Moscow is a large, open plain called, after the nunnery that stands on it, the Maidens' Field; and here at Carnival and other holiday times, booths are erected, and various forms of cheap entertainment are offered to the people. Tolstoy used to go there to watch the crowd and see what dramatic art was offered them. He found that the favourite plays were of the blood-and-thunder variety; the most popular of all being one named after Tchoúrkin, the criminal mentioned in a previous chapter, who combined generosity to the poor with his robberies and murders, and who had escaped from Siberia four times. It was for performance in these booths, and to replace plays of that kind, that Tolstoy wrote *The First Distiller*, and it was actually performed there. It is surprising that one never hears of it being acted at Temperance gatherings, for it is a short and easy piece.

Feinermann, after being expelled by the police from Yásnaya, wished to earn something by literary work; and in December 1886 Tolstoy sent him a letter of advice:

Finish the story you have begun as soon as you can, and send it here. But do not be led into trying to say everything in a single story. That is a constant stumbling-block to the inexperienced. . . .

Do not force or bend to your purpose the events in the story, but follow them wherever they lead you.

<sup>1</sup> Included in his *Plays*.

Wherever life leads, it can always and in everything be lit up by the one light. Lack of symmetry and the apparent haphazardness of events is a chief sign of real life.

Do not be drawn far from the main subject, but finish it and send it. Sitin pays everybody from Rs. 30 to Rs. 50 [£3 to £5] per sheet [of 40,000 letters]. . . .

I am living well and ill. Well, because peaceably and lovingly; ill, because in physical illness and dishonourably.

By this time 'Tolstoy Colonies' were springing up in various parts of Russia, and to one of them Feinermann eventually betook himself. To follow the fortunes of these Colonies would take me far beyond the limits of this work; but, speaking generally, they failed; and besides inflicting privations on those who joined them, occasioned much quarrelling. Later on, similar Colonies were started in England, Holland, and the United States, with a like result. The experience of these communities has been very instructive, and throws much light on Tolstoy's teaching.

He has condemned so many forms of human activity, including all service of Governments (central or local), all service connected with army, navy, church or chapel, all forms of capitalism or landlordism, and all work done for capitalists or landlords, as well as commerce, professional medicine, art, and science—that those who, impressed by the validity of his indictment of existing economic injustices, came under the sway of his persuasive eloquence and concluded that he had grasped the whole truth and knew the whole solution of the problem, were often led to abandon their accustomed ways of life, to uproot themselves from the places where they were known, to abandon their family connections, and to start life anew on fresh lines, abjuring the things that, according to him, made life hideous, arid and vile.

But having done this, what were they to do next? Hard manual labour was the thing he chiefly recommended;



but without co-operation and skilled direction, such labour does not, in Russia, enable an inexperienced man to secure even a bare subsistence.

To form a Colony of like-minded men and women presented itself as a solution of the difficulty; and Tolstoy, if he did not expressly encourage such Colonies, at least regarded them benevolently, and did not denounce them as he denounced the ways in which educated people usually earn a livelihood.

It was when the Colonies got to work that the real defects of Tolstoyism as a constructive policy became obvious. The preliminary inconsistencies—the buying or hiring of land, for instance—could be passed over as evils incidental to the transition from a bad life to a good one; and the fact that spades, ploughs and other things had to be bought, could also be excused or palliated; but the insurmountable difficulty arose from the fact that those who took to Colony-life were for the most part people who disregarded and disapproved of the regulations enacted not only by the Church but also by the State. To them, Civil and Criminal law was an abomination. They had broken away from the customary ruts of life in order to guide their lives solely by the dictates of reason and conscience. There was no longer any trade-custom or accepted routine to guide them; and when they turned to Tolstoy for help, it appeared that his teaching did not supply what was needed. Such general indications as it contains, furnish no sufficient guidance for the life of a community; and ‘reason and conscience’ are so differently developed in different people, that where there is neither fixed law and accepted custom, nor a Moses wielding Theocratic powers, it inevitably happens that discussion and friction absorb much of the time and energy that should go into work. Misunderstandings arise, co-operation becomes more and more impossible, and people learn by sad experience how essential law and government are, if any man

is to know what he may expect of his fellows, and what others may reasonably demand of him. The chief lesson taught by the failure of the Tolstoy Colonies is, that definiteness in our relations with our fellow-men is essential to harmonious intercourse; and that the ultimate and chief reason for the existence and persistence of legal tribunals is not (as Tolstoy supposes) to enable the rich to exploit the poor, the cunning to prey on the simple, and lawyer-sharks to live on the community at large—but it is, to supply men with the nearest approach we can get, to impartial arbitration for the settlement of their disputes. If two men quarrel about the ownership of a field, the essential thing is, not that A should have it, or that B should have it, but that the quarrel should be *settled*, and the field again become the undisputed possession of somebody, in order that undisturbed use may be made of it and that both A and B may be free to get on with their other business, without having to discuss points they are unable to agree upon. Remove the law, and induce men to believe that no fixed code or seat of judgment should exist, and the only people who will be able to get on at all decently, will be those who, like the Russian country peasantry, follow a traditional way of life, doing their work just as their fathers and grandfathers did before them, and always travelling in custom's deep-worn ruts.

That the mass of common men may be able to break away from those ruts, reference to some external law is essential. Without it, we cannot get differently developed individuals to toe the same line or keep at all in step.

The root evil of Tolstoyism is that it disdains and condemns the result of the experience gained by our forefathers, who devised a system which, in spite of the many defects that still hamper it, has made it possible for men to co-operate practically, and to carry on their diverse works with a minimum of friction.

A great stumbling-block in the Tolstoy Colonies proved to be the law of Non-Resistance, which condemns all physical force used to prevent any one from doing what he likes. It is quite true that wonderful things have frequently been accomplished by men and women who relied on forces higher than the physical, and used moral or mental suasion in place of brute violence. Stated *comparatively*, the proposition that it is better to use persuasion than force, and that mind is greater than matter, is excellent. But Non-Resistance occasioned harm when a man or a community adopted it as a rigid rule, and thereby deprived himself, or itself, of the power to check obvious wrongs in what was sometimes the only way they could be checked.

Without attempting a history of the Tolstoy Colonies, I may mention a few typical instances of the way in which they broke down.

The first of these instances occurred in the Schavéevsky Colony in the Province of Smolénsk. The Colonists adopted a neglected youngster, and took him to live with them. He listened to their discussions, readings, and conversations, and learnt that no physical force should be used to any one, that it is wrong to possess property, and that no Colonist should have anything to do with the police or the Law Courts. One morning the Colonist who had special charge of the lad, awoke and began to dress, but could not find his waistcoat until at last he discovered that the boy was wearing it. The Colonist asked for the waistcoat, but the boy refused to give it up. The man explained how wrong it is to steal, but the boy could not see the point of the argument. If property is wrong, why was it any more wrong for a boy to have it than for a man? The other Colonists were gradually drawn into the dispute, and as it developed it became more and more apparent that the whole battery of Tolstoy's arguments concerning property and judging, as well

as his insistence on condoning all offences, claiming no rights, and acknowledging only duties, were on the boy's side in the controversy. He was accusing no one: and was therefore able to assume a tone of moral superiority. He wanted the waistcoat as much as the man did. He was quite willing to discuss the subject; but it was impossible to alter his opinion that he was going to keep the waistcoat, and that it was very wrong of any one to want to take it from him. That particular waistcoat might not have mattered; but the question at stake was, Whether any one might rely on retaining anything: a pen, a tool, or even a book he had begun to write? It was a question of principle, going to the root of the possibility of working efficiently, or of co-operating. The incident showed up the fact that the Colonists did not know what they really approved or disapproved of. It further showed that in undermining the bases of Church and State, Tolstoy has unwittingly tunnelled much further and endangered the very bases of any possible code, or of any fixed agreement between man and man. If we accept all he has said as valid, any lunatic, drunkard, wayward child, or angry man, may block the traffic in Cheapside indefinitely; and it would not need many such people to plunge a whole community into chaos.

Another case occurred at the Tver Colony. The farm they had bought was a wretchedly poor one, with sandy soil; but attached to it was a wood, some 80 acres in extent, situated  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles away. Some time after the Colonists had settled on the farm, a man wished to join them, and they set to work to cut timber from their wood to build a house for him and his family to live in. The man, however, changed his mind and did not join the Colony, and some peasants from the neighbouring village offered to buy the trees that had been felled. One of the Colonists then raised the ethical problem whether it was right to sell the trees, seeing that it had been agreed that

the Colonists would only consider as their own, things they worked with or required for their work, and they did not work with or require this timber.

‘If,’ said he, ‘we do not need it, what right have we to consider it ours? It belongs to those who need it, that is, to the peasants who want to buy it. All property not required for one’s personal work is kept and held only by violence; and therefore, if we claim such property, we maintain the principle of violence. But what does our Colony stand for, but a protest against such violence? If we acknowledge and support the evil principle by selling wood we do not require, what sense is there in our whole undertaking?’

His arguments convinced his companions. They collected the peasants who wished to buy timber, and explained to them that as it was not they (the Colonists) but God who had caused the trees to grow, and as the peasants needed the timber more than they did, it was the peasants who should take it.

The latter, when they had convinced themselves that the Colonists had not gone mad, and were speaking seriously, were delighted, and hastened to remove the timber; but they too were logical, and said: ‘Then you also do not require the thicket from which the timber was cut? It also is God’s, and any one may cut what he wants in it?’

Having said A, the Colonists had to say B, and to admit that they had no right to the thicket.

Winter was coming to an end, and as soon as this news had spread, peasants from the surrounding villages hastened to utilise the last days of sledging, before the thaw set in and the roads became impassable. Some came with one sledge and some with as many as five. Soon a peasant from the nearest village came running to the Colony to say that so many people had gone to the wood, that something like a fight had already begun, and it was urgently

necessary to arrange some order and not allow everybody to cut trees at one and the same time. The Colonists became alarmed, fearing that some one would be killed; but they were so upset at this result of their application of the principle of Non-Resistance, that they could not make up their minds to go to the wood themselves and establish order. Something had to be done, however; and they appointed the peasant who had brought the news, to the post of forester, with instructions to let only a few people in at a time. (They learnt subsequently, that he only let in those who paid him.)

The peasants were dissatisfied. Those who had taken timber were vexed at not having got more while it was to be had for the taking; and those who got none, felt aggrieved. Crowds came to the Colony to ask for passes to cut trees, and the Colonists had to refuse them, and felt very much ashamed of themselves for having occasioned such confusion and so much quarrelling. The best peasants blamed the Colonists, saying: 'If you wanted to do good, you should have divided the wood among the poorest peasants. But now the richest, who have several horses, have carried off most of the timber, and the poorest have got nothing!'

The fact is, that the institution of property does not rest ultimately on selfishness. Bad and selfish use is often made of property, but the institution rests at bottom on something better. If no property existed we should all perish of want. But if property exists, it must be controlled by some one, or by some group of people, otherwise waste, confusion, and friction will inevitably result.

One of the world's greatest needs is that property should be held (whether by individuals, by groups, by Municipalities, or by Governments on behalf of the whole people) with a sense of responsibility, wisely administered, and its fruits unselfishly used; but by denouncing it as a thing

wrong in itself, Tolstoy has caused many conscientiously sensitive men and women to be ashamed of their plain duty, and to neglect both the administration of property, and the exercise of their due influence in promoting the good government of their town, district, or nation.

An incident that occurred in the Khárkof Colony has the same moral. The Colonists' land and house had been bought in the name of M. Alyóhin, who held it for the use of the Colony, believing that no one has any right to own property, to defend it, or to go to law about it.

One day there appeared on the scene an eccentric fellow named Klóbsky, who called himself a 'Teacher of Life.' Having discussed the whole question with Alyóhin and with the Colonists, he went to bed. Next morning at breakfast he announced to them:

'Gentlemen! I have to inform you that from to-day your Colony will have neither house nor land. You are astonished?' added he, raising his head and glaring at them. 'Then I will speak more plainly. Your farmhouse, with its outbuildings, garden and fields, now belongs to me. I am master here, and request you to clear out! Do you hear? I allow you three days to go!'

The Colonists were thunderstruck, and did not understand what had happened. The simple fact was that, having ascertained that Alyóhin did not consider that his position as trustee for the others gave him any right to use either law or force, Klóbsky had made up his mind to take possession of the property.

None of the Colonists resisted him, and they all cleared out of the place; but two days later Alyóhin called the peasants of the neighbouring village together, and presented the property to their Commune, duly signing the legal deeds necessary to give them possession.

Klóbsky, thereupon, seeing the game was up, departed, and the peasants entered into possession. They, at least, felt no qualms of conscience about possessing it, and the

indefiniteness which had occasioned the trouble, was at an end.

Tolstoy expressed himself as being pleased with this result. The land had gone to the peasants, and the 'intelligents' might settle down and work for them. But therein I think Tolstoy was not quite consistent; for if the institution of property is wrong in itself, its possession even by a village Commune, for the use of the peasants, is wrong; for the original proposition was an absolute one—'property is robbery'—and not a comparative one depending on the amount of property, or the number of its owners; and what right had a Kharkof Village Commune to hold property (as they certainly would hold it) against the yet poorer inhabitants of some other village?

Tolstoyans who tried living by themselves in the villages, seem generally to have fared no better than these Colonists and though one does not take Anna Seuron literally there is some truth in her remarks:

There were many young men of good family who married peasant girls, or simply lived with peasant girls in some village, and perished in dirt and drink. Some worked themselves to death. These cases are not generally known, as the families avoided publicity.

However, the madness that seized everybody, as when Goethe wrote of Werther, was merely a mania and a misunderstanding. Those who now imitate Tolstoy, arrange matters far better. They take and reject from his teaching what they like, and that is the way to succeed with it.

The Count never raised quite common, morally-fallen people, but on the contrary depressed them yet more. He feels a repulsion for 'the refuse of humanity,' and utilises them only for anatomical examination.

Tolstoy's Christian-anarchist and anti-Government principles of course preclude him from advocating the State-ownership of property, which, with people half as honest and unselfish as men must be to run a Communist Colony,



the Gospel pictures. No one but you knows the matter of the pictures which you have in your heart. No one but you can so sincerely express it, and no one else can draw them as you can.

He goes on to say that even if the pictures do not all come up to the same high level, the worst of them will still be an important contribution to real art.

The chief work written by Tolstoy at this time was his philosophic book *On Life*, about which, in a letter written in June, he says: 'I am always at my work, *On Life and Death*. I cannot tear myself away till it is finished. I live in it. I do not know if it is wrong, but I cannot tear myself away.'

This work is so important and (owing once again to the fact that we have no good translation) so little known, that I am tempted to give a brief summary of its contents—though a summary of a philosophical work shorn of all its illustrative and personal touches, cannot do it anything like justice.

The main argument is, that each man seeks his own good. In our efforts to attain it we come into conflict with one another. Even if we attain this 'good,' it is unsatisfactory, and ends with death. Pseudo-science teaches that we should pursue our material welfare. Pseudo-Christianity teaches us that our object should be the attainment of a future life.

We feel that we ought to be happy, yet find happiness unattainable. This is because our aim is not a single one. We seek an animal good, but what we really long for, is spiritual good. We can never, by the study of matter, learn the true purpose of life. Satisfaction can only be attained by subjecting our material desires to our higher nature. This is the message of all the great religious teachers. True life consists in controlling the lower nature by the higher. If self-denial is voluntary, it becomes a joy. The recognition of this truth is the first step towards

a higher life. If the good we seek is the good of others, it does not end at death. The simple-minded feel this to be reasonable, but 'culture' obscures it. We are members one of another. The life of self-sacrifice is the only reasonable life; and love dwells in every heart, leading us towards such a life. To make this our object solves life's apparent contradictions. Even the misery of others, if we strive to relieve them, helps us on towards a higher life. Love seems to many a painful feeling, as temporary as earthly existence. That is because they think of love as a desire. Such love is but a selfish preference for *our* friend. Real love means doing good, not getting good at the expense of others. The self-sacrifice of such love has no limits; nor does it discriminate between its objects. What is usually called love is merely a preference for some elements of one's own happiness over some other elements. From this root, however, real love may grow. True happiness begins only with the rebirth which enables us to see that the thing to aim at is not our own personal welfare; and enables us honestly to say, 'I want nothing for myself.' Other love than this, increases our capacity for misery. True welfare is attained, not by seeking means of happiness, and distributing them to those whom we pick out, but by renouncing them. It is to be had by grasping every opportunity of benefiting others, regardless of ourselves. Love is the sacrifice of oneself and one's desires, and it is the path of eternal life. Such spontaneous love is often met with among children. Older people often do not recognise it at all, or prefer animal love. Life runs onwards towards the destruction of our animal being; yet people vainly strive to preserve only that. Such success as is possible in that direction brings, first satiety, then increasing pain, and it finally fails at death. The fear of death accompanies the desire for a rich life. The enjoyments of such a life are obtained at the expense of others, and preclude love. The increase of wants, and the

obtaining of things to allay them, is useless and unsatisfying.

Truth cries, 'There can be no death!' Man's heart responds, 'There can be no death!' To the unenlightened this seems absurd. Yet death is but a natural change. Previous changes have proved so satisfactory that we wish to remain in the state we have now reached. Either life consists of these common changes of Nature, in which case it is permanent and unchanging life that should be terrible; or it consists in consciousness. We know that this consciousness began in countless ancestors of ours; why, then, suppose that it will end with us? What we really fear, is the obliteration of this consciousness. We confuse the two conceptions, and think that something unnatural (which we call 'death') will occur in Nature. The apparent contradiction causes uncertainty and fear. Men fear the death of the body, because the thought of that event causes them to realise their need of a true life, which they feel they do not possess. The body is only an incident and expression of Consciousness; the thinking, feeling part is one's true self. The body is not continuous; it is always changing gradually, and consciousness is interrupted day after day by sleep. Hence, consciousness is not identical with the body; and our real self, which we fear to lose by death, cannot be dependent on the body. This 'self' is that which likes and dislikes. One's 'self' is that which loves: it is the essence; all that we think we can lose, is but an accident. As changes follow one another and our submission to the law of reason increases, love and happiness grow proportionately. Knowing that we have received and developed our lives from a past which we do not see, we feel no fear of a future we also do not see. 'My eldest brother's [Nicholas Tolstoy's] consciousness, his *self*, influenced me when he was alive, and now that he is dead it still influences me; that is to say, our relation still continues and will ever continue.' We know ourselves only

by our true life, or consciousness. We see that this is subject to laws; therefore we infer that what happens in it is also subject to law, and we must not complain because we cannot see what is beyond our sight. The facts of life and death cease to be terrible or gloomy when looked at calmly. The apparent purposelessness of suffering is an indication that this personal physical life is not the whole of existence. The true explanation of suffering lies in the connection between error and pain. Suffering is the main-spring of activity. When we regard it as the result of ill-doing in ourselves or our fellows, and as the guide and stimulus to the cure of that evil, it ceases to be mysterious or terrible. There is a limit to our capacity for feeling pain. To the unreflecting being, even the memory of pain is short-lived; and one's mind can rise superior to it, on seeing that it is necessary for progress. It warns us also of the coming parting with the flesh, and develops in us the higher life of love. The happiness for which we strive may be had by all who recognise and submit to the higher law.

*On Life* could not be published in Russia, owing to reflections it contains on the Christianity of the Churches; and as it was not printed, and Tolstoy got no 'proofs' of it, he did not submit it to that repeated, strenuous, careful, and laborious scrutiny and correction to which his works when printed in Russia were subjected. Unfortunately, as *On Life* is a philosophical work, and Tolstoy's powers of expression are not specially adapted to such a subject, it was, of all his writings, the one that most urgently needed revision. Carelessly printed in Geneva, or copied from the rough manuscript, it requires much critical acumen on the part of its readers to grasp its full meaning; and the first translation published in English was such rubbish as ought never to have been attributed to any sane man. We have as yet, I think, no satisfactory translation; but Bolton Hall of New York, without knowing Russian,

puzzled out the meaning of the book, and has written a free paraphrase giving its essence very well. This will be found in the second part of his book, *Even as You and I*, and the substance of it has been republished in another volume, entitled *Love and Life and Peace*.

Wishing to give his views what publicity he could, Tolstoy read a paper on *Life's Meaning* to the Moscow Psychological Society. The meeting was a very crowded one, as everybody wished to hear Tolstoy; but Materialism was at that time dominant among educated Russians, and Tolstoy's treatment of the problem was not generally understood by those who heard his paper.

*On Life* had a profound influence on the whole future of some of those who read it. The late Ernest H. Crosby, who, after sitting (with Roosevelt) as a Republican in the New York State Legislature, went as Judge of the Mixed Courts to Alexandria (where Moberly Bell was his colleague) was an instance of this. A French translation of *On Life* (made by the Countess S. A. Tolstoy) which fell into his hand, profoundly altered his perception of what is worth striving for in life. When he visited Tolstoy, the latter told him it would be very hard for him (Crosby) handicapped by 'all the disadvantages of youth, health, and wealth,' to do good, but that he must not cease to try. Crosby returned to America, abandoned politics and law, and wrote two volumes of poems (many of them very good indeed) presenting the Tolstoyan view of life. He also did much lecturing. Unable to 'get off men's backs,' he 'sat on them as lightly as he could.' At one election he refrained, on Christian-anarchist principles, from voting; but his conscience pricked him, and at the next election he voted for Bryan, excusing this backsliding by saying that he had not yet reached the stage of development at which one passes beyond the temptation of politics, and that he felt it more honest to act accordingly, though he knew that it was wrong!

He was a most excellent and honourable man, and I doubt not that he did much good; but in his case, as in that of many others, I felt that his efforts to serve his fellow-men were hampered by his acceptance of the sweeping condemnations and negations of the Tolstoyan faith, which are surely less natural and less excusable in a citizen of the United States, than in a Russian or an Oriental.

In August 1887 Tolstoy's brother-in-law, S. A. Behrs, returned from the Caucasus, and visited Yásnaya. The following is his account of the changes he noticed in Tolstoy, with whom as a lad he had been so familiar, but whom he had now not seen for nine years.

Tolstoy, he says, had grown older and greyer, but not unduly so:

His face, however, showed evident signs of the serious mental suffering he had endured. It was calm, sad, and had a quite new look; and it was not his face only, but his whole personality that had completely altered; and not his life only and his relation to everybody, but his whole mental activity. If he still retained many of his former views (his hostility to 'progress' and 'civilisation,' for instance) the ground for these convictions had greatly changed.

Leo Nikoláyevitch had become the personification of the idea of love of one's neighbour, and if I may be allowed a paradox, I should say that for the sake of those views he sinned against them: as, for instance, when he was severe with people who misbehaved.

Education, in the sense of knowledge of Nature, men and life, he considers good in so far as it is necessary to enable us to serve our neighbours, but, as a manifestation of 'progress,' enabling us to enslave our neighbours, education is harmful. He considers that this last is what is aimed at by contemporary society, and that education is only sought for the sake of getting above one's fellows, distinguishing oneself from them, and subjecting them to oneself. He has therefore ceased to concern himself about his sons' education, and is displeased that his wife still attends to it. When his eldest son had taken his degree

at the University, and asked his father's advice about a future career, the latter advised him to go as workman to a peasant.

Education, he holds, should develop love and compassion for one's neighbour, and to that end should stifle sexual desire and not develop it, as is done, he considers, in all contemporary society. Love of simplicity, and an unexacting mind as to one's surroundings, should also be aimed at in education. Sincere politeness is desirable (again as a manifestation of love of one's fellows), but far-fetched politeness is undesirable, and is a sure sign of selfishness. . . . Leo Nikoláyevitch himself is now at times fond of employing a peasant manner of speech, as an indication of the simplicity he recommends.

Anna Seuron's remarks relating to the same period are in substantial agreement with the above. She says :

One cannot say that the Count paid much attention to his children's education. On the contrary, he often spoke against instruction, though he considered it quite natural that they should know everything. And it so happened that, in the event, the eldest daughter took to painting and the eldest son became a good musician. In general, thanks to tutors and governesses, all the children received a more or less good education.

Behrs continues :

His former appreciation of the aristocracy has been replaced by compassion chiefly for the peasants. The lower a man stands in the social scale, the more, in his opinion, he should evoke compassion. So, in *The Power of Darkness*, the best person presented is Akim, the cesspool-cleaner.

Tolstoy's former isolation is now replaced by complete accessibility for every one: except when restrictions are imposed, not by him but by his wife, out of consideration for his health.

Concerning his relation to his property, he told me that he had wished to free himself from it, as from an evil which oppressed him; but he acted wrongly at first, in wishing to throw the burden on to others; that is to say, he tried to insist on distributing it, and thereby caused another evil—namely,

an energetic protest from, and the serious discontent of, his wife. In consequence of that protest he offered to transfer all he had to her, and when she at first refused, he offered it, equally in vain, to his children. After that, not wishing to oppose his wife by force, and abandoning the attempt to transfer the burden to others, he adopted the plan of ignoring his property: refused to have anything to do with it, or to care about its fate, and ceased to make use of it, except that he continued to live in the house at Yásnaya Polyána. Disapproving in principle of giving money in alms, since every coin is a means of enslaving our fellows, he yet considered it impossible to refuse to use money, because his family continue to use his estate. My sister told me that they give away from Rs. 2000 to Rs. 3000 [£200 to £300] every year to the poor. While I was there a poor peasant, whose house had burnt down, came to Leo Nikoláyevitch and asked him for wood to build a shed. He invited me to come, and we took axes and cut down some trees in the Yásno-Polyána wood, chopping off the branches and tying the trunks on to the peasant's cart. I confess I did this with pleasure; experiencing a till then unknown joy, perhaps in consequence of Leo Nikoláyevitch's influence, but perhaps simply because I was doing this for an unfortunate man who was really ill, worn out, and destitute. . . . When the peasant had gone, Leo Nikoláyevitch said to me: 'Can one doubt the necessity and pleasure of rendering such aid?'

Behrs was struck by the fact that Tolstoy had quite given up smoking and wine; and he notes that Tolstoy never at this time requested others to work for him, and accepted little assistance even from members of his own family; and when he did accept any, did so rather because he knew it gave them pleasure, than for his own sake.

At dinner, when the servant hands a dish round, though he evidently does not like being served, he does not refuse it, because he does not wish either to force his views on his family, or to grieve them by leaving the table. He does his own room every day; with the result that everything in it is dusty and untidy. Yet, strange to say, it does not create the unpleasant impression one gets from other untidy rooms.



From compassion for animals, he has giving up hunting; and he told me he has not merely lost all wish to hunt, but feels astonished that he could formerly have liked it. From the same feeling of compassion he has become a vegetarian, and ceased to ride on horseback.

Anna Seuron also tells us that Tolstoy, among his other renunciations, gave up riding; but this must have been for quite a short time; for when I came to know him a few years later, he frequently went out riding; and his daughter, Másha, told me she could not remember the time when he did not ride.

There was one pleasure he allowed himself: in summer he always had flowers on his table, or stuck in his leather girdle, or held in his hand. 'You should see,' says Anna Seuron, 'with what enjoyment he lifts them, from time to time, to his big nose, and how he then looks round mildly, as if thanking the Creator for giving us flowers.'

Behrs tells us that:

When Tolstoy remained in Yásnaya for some days after his family had moved to Moscow, he cooked his own food. . . . He retains his love of exercise, only he now directs it to useful purposes: ploughing, hut-building, journeys on foot, etc. . . .

The merry mood, so enlivening to others, that was formerly always present in Tolstoy, has now quite vanished. There is nothing morose or specially sad about him, but there is hardly a trace of his former animation. That characteristic seems to have fallen to pieces and to have been shared among his children. Quite unabashed by his presence, they are noisily animated, and this harmonises admirably with his seriousness, and throws into relief his strict attitude on moral questions. Their talks, and songs, and piano-playing, and their youthful disposition in general, seemed to me to please him, though he himself took no part in it all. Only on the day of my arrival—guessing, no doubt, my grief at the change I noticed in him—he played tricks with me, to the delight of us all: unexpectedly jumping upon my back when I was walking about the room. He is still fond of the society of little children, but no longer tries to

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excite them as he used to. While I was there, his younger sons and nephews often played draughts with him. While doing this almost mechanically, he listens to the general conversation in which, contrary to his former habit, he does not intervene (especially not if it relates to his teaching), but for the most part remains silent.

He advised me to leave the Civil Service and change my way of life, and he spoke to me about the happiness that comes of fulfilling the duty of love to one's neighbour. In particular he mentioned young Prince D. A. Hilkóf to me, as an example. Hilkóf had not been personally acquainted with Leo Nikoláyevitch, nor probably with his teaching; yet almost simultaneously with its publication, disregarding his connections and rank, the young prince gave his lands to the peasants and retained only about 25 acres for himself. Nor did he even settle on that, but went to work without pay, as workman to a peasant. He is diligently making himself expert as a workman, and waiting till he has become so proficient that a neighbouring Jew will offer him Rs. 5 a month to work for him. Only then does Hilkóf intend to marry and settle down on his 25 acres.

This Prince Hilkóf is so remarkable a man, and has been so closely connected with Tolstoy, that I may perhaps be allowed to digress in order briefly to tell his story. He had been the youngest Colonel in the Russian army, and had fought not merely the Turks but also the dishonest contractors, with great zest and courage. Though an excellent administrator, greatly beloved by his men, and much interested in his work, he felt so ill-at-ease after cutting down a Turk with his own hand in a cavalry charge, that he only awaited the termination of the war of 1878, to resign his commission and leave the army. He then, quite on Tolstoy's lines, adopted the way of life mentioned by Behrs in the passage quoted above. Being a man of great ability, tactful and sincere, he soon acquired considerable influence over the neighbouring peasants; but having repudiated the Russian Church, he was denounced by the priests and exiled to the Caucasus, where he lived among

the Doukhobórs; and when they refused military service in 1895, the authorities, wrongly suspecting him of having influenced them, re-banished him, to the Baltic Provinces this time. From thence Hilkóf was allowed, in 1898, to go into exile abroad, and it was at the Purleigh Colony, in Essex, that I first made his acquaintance. I shall have further occasion to mention him when I come to speak of the services he rendered to the Doukhobór Migration.

If the abolition of poverty could be brought about by adopting the course Tolstoy recommends, or if the adoption of that course led to an inner consciousness of having chosen the true path, Prince D. A. Hilkóf, of all others, should be the man best able to testify to the fact. No one has resigned more, simplified his life more, or tested the Christian-anarchist doctrine in practice more whole-heartedly. But as a result of testing the course Tolstoy himself was prevented from following, Hilkóf has come to the conclusion that it does not meet the needs of the case. The people of Russia need honest and capable leadership by men with a gift for organisation; and it is not by persuading such men to devote themselves to manual labour that the fear of famine can be exorcised, or the rule of law substituted for despotic caprice. Hilkóf to-day, after all his experiences, is more of a Socialist-Revolutionary than of a Tolstoyan. The very fact that he was banished to a distant part of the Empire without trial, and without even having any definite charge brought against him, shows how impossible it is for isolated individuals—sincerely and devotedly anxious though they may be to help the people—to make headway against a Government that ignores all law.

To return, however, to what Behrs tells us of Tolstoy:

He is still regarded with deep loyalty and sincere love by his whole family, which, as the proverb has it, 'looks him in the eye.' They also all feel great respect for his genius.

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Reports have repeatedly appeared in the press to the effect that Tolstoy's family dissent from his views. But not to mention the fact that, besides little children, the family consists of his wife, three grown-up sons and two grown-up daughters, each of whom has a right to his or her own convictions, that opinion is incorrect.

In accord with the rule of not resisting evil by violence, Leo Nikoláyevitch is anxious that his children's relation to his teaching should be perfectly free. He tells them what he believes; but not even in his tone is there the least attempt to impose it on them. . . . He told me himself that he is much afraid of anything that might lead his children to follow his teaching insincerely, or even to follow it sincerely but not spontaneously. They know this very well, and therefore act with complete freedom.

On the other hand, there is in Leo Nikoláyevitch's relation to his wife, a shade of exactingness and reproach, or even dissatisfaction. He accuses her of preventing him from giving away his property, and of continuing to educate the children in the old way.

His wife, for her part, considers herself to have acted rightly, and is vexed at this attitude of his. She has been the closest witness of all his spiritual sufferings, and in general of the gradual development of his thoughts; and in consequence she has again and again had to suffer on her husband's account. She has involuntarily developed a dread and abhorrence of his teaching and its consequences. Feeling how powerless she was to influence his genius or aid him in his spiritual evolution, she was driven to think only of her children, and to oppose those of her husband's demands which related to them, that is, in regard to the distribution of his property and in regard to their education. The saying, 'Between two fires,' fails to describe her position between her husband's spiritual sufferings and demands on the one side, and the impossibility, with her convictions and for the sake of the children, of submitting to those demands on the other. On her alone, during a whole decade, was his theory tested and amended during its slow growth; and the result has been that a tone of contradiction has arisen between them, in which mutual reproach makes

itself heard. That is the only ground on which disagreement has occurred; in all other respects they are now, as formerly, a model couple.

On one occasion she said to me, with tears in her eyes: 'It is hard for me now; I have to do everything, whereas formerly I was only his assistant. The property and the education of the children are all on my hands. And I am blamed for attending to them and not going about as a beggar! Do you think I would not have followed him, had I not had little children? But he has forgotten everything for the sake of his teaching!'

Many years later, while I was writing this book, the Countess remarked to me that the beginning and the end of her married life had been happy, but the middle had been unhappy. At the period this story has reached, she was, as we know, meeting the economic difficulties of the situation by publishing her husband's works; and these continued to sell exceedingly well. Of no other Russian writer have so many Collected Editions (over a dozen) been sold. Anna Seuron tells us:

The Count was at this time tranquil, though his teaching attracted more and more attention to him, and his books sold more and more. He still took little part in their publication, but only wished to be left in peace and not interfered with. He was engaged on work of importance. But even then, his wife managed to copy out and put in order various scraps of his writings [of an artistic kind, and publishable in Russia] and used to put them on his table with large sheets of clean paper, to tempt him to add some more—which he occasionally did, as it were, accidentally. He sometimes allowed himself to be led, as it were, in leading-strings; and he then reminded me of a good-natured cannibal, or a tame bear, led about on a cord. But his smile at such times was a sad one, and his eyes would moisten with tears.

At the end of Behrs' *Recollections* are some passages added, apparently, about the time his book was published (1893) which somewhat modify the effect of what he saw in 1887. He says, for instance:

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To protect her children's interest, when Leo Nikoláyevitch wanted to give away his estates to outsiders, his wife was prepared to appeal to the authorities to put his property under guardianship. And when her husband offered her his possessions, she accepted a power-of-attorney giving her the management of all his property, except his later works, those written in the spirit of his teaching. This teaching she now begins to regard and discuss dispassionately.

He also adds something about the elder children's attitude towards their father's teaching, of which the following is a summary :

The eldest son [Sergius] does not, as far as I know, agree with his father's opinions. When the latter surrendered all personal claim on his property, this son, in obedience to his mother's wish, undertook the management of the estate, and at the same time began his service in the office of the local Zémstvo. [Later on he was elected to the Moscow Douma.]

The second son [Ilyá] wished to follow the rules laid down in his father's religious and social creed. He left the High School, and has married and settled on one of the smaller estates where, though his wife belongs to the gentry, they lead a strictly simple life, and have no servants.

Ilyá's wife to the present day sympathises largely with Tolstoy's views; but Ilyá—a man of literary ability (as shown by his writings, published anonymously)—exemplifies one of the dangers of Tolstoy's teaching, a danger which has shown itself in the case of many Tolstoyans. Cut off by their principles from such work as is most readily accessible to educated men, their ability often runs to waste, their talents are buried, and they fail to render the service mankind most needs of them, and which they are best fitted to perform.

As an American writer has well said on this subject :

By our daily experience we have discovered that we cannot mechanically hold up a moral standard, and jump at it in rare moments of exhilaration; but that even as the ideal itself

must be a rational development of life, so the strength to attain it must be secured from interest in life itself. . . . We slowly learn that life consists of processes as well as results, and that failure may come quite as easily from ignoring the adequacy of one's methods as from selfish or ignoble aims. . . . We are learning that a standard of social ethics is not attained by travelling sequestered byways, but by mixing on the thronged and common road where all must turn out for one another, and at least see the size of one another's burdens. . . . We realise, too, that social perspective and sanity of judgment come only from contact with social experience; and that such contact is the surest corrective of opinions concerning the social order, and concerning efforts for its improvement.

That, though not written apropos of Tolstoyism, is the profoundest and truest criticism of it that I know.

There is in Jane Addams' book, from which I have just quoted, another passage that would be harsh and unjust if applied to Tolstoy, who is in every way an exceptional man, but which admirably describes a very usual effect of denunciatory and repressive creeds such as his :

The result as well as the process of virtues attained by repression, has become distasteful to us. When the entire moral energy of an individual goes into the cultivation of personal integrity, we all know how unlovely the result may become; the character is upright, of course, but too coated-over with the result of its own endeavour, to be attractive. In the effort towards a higher morality in our social relations, we must demand that the individual shall be willing to lose the sense of personal achievement, and shall be content to realise his activity only in connection with the activity of the many. . . .

To return, however, to Behrs' recapitulation of the attitudes of the Tolstoy children. The third son, Leo Lvóvitch (Lion-son-of-a-Lion) 'was continuing his education, but told me that he should do his best to observe the moral laws of the Count.' A few years later,

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Leo Lvóvitch wrote several short stories, in which he adopted the attitude of running counter to some of his father's views. His *Chopin's Prelude*, in particular, was written in defence of marriage, against his father's *Kreutzer Sonata*, and one of his critics, alluding to the tone of these writings, spoke of him as 'Tígr Tígrovitch' (Tiger-son-of-a-Tiger).

The younger sons, Andrew and Michael, served in the army voluntarily, and have not much sympathy with their father's views. Andrew (who nearly died of inflammation of the brain when he was young) belongs to the reactionary Black Hundred organisation, and has grieved his father in various ways.

Before her marriage, the eldest daughter, Tatiána (now Madame Soohoteén) [or Souhotín] helped her father a great deal with his writing and correspondence, and there has always been a strong affection between them.

'It is, however, the second daughter,' says Behrs, 'more than all the rest, who is devoted to her father, and, as far as she is allowed, rigorously observes his every rule and maxim.'

This daughter, Mary Lvóvna (Másha) who by marriage became Princess Obolénsky, studied medicine at one time, and, in 1886, we hear of her, 'in print blouse, passing examinations to qualify as a Primary School teacher.' Helping her father with his correspondence, copying his MSS., teaching village children, and attending to the sick in the village, her life was crowded with interests and with work.

After her sisters married, the youngest daughter, the Countess Alexandra, succeeded them as her father's assistant and typist, and became quite as devoted to him, and to his ideas, as either of her sisters had been. When Behrs wrote his book in 1887, she was, however, only three years old.

Speaking to me one day of trouble he had had with one



of his sons, Tolstoy added: 'I have reason to thank God for my daughters.'

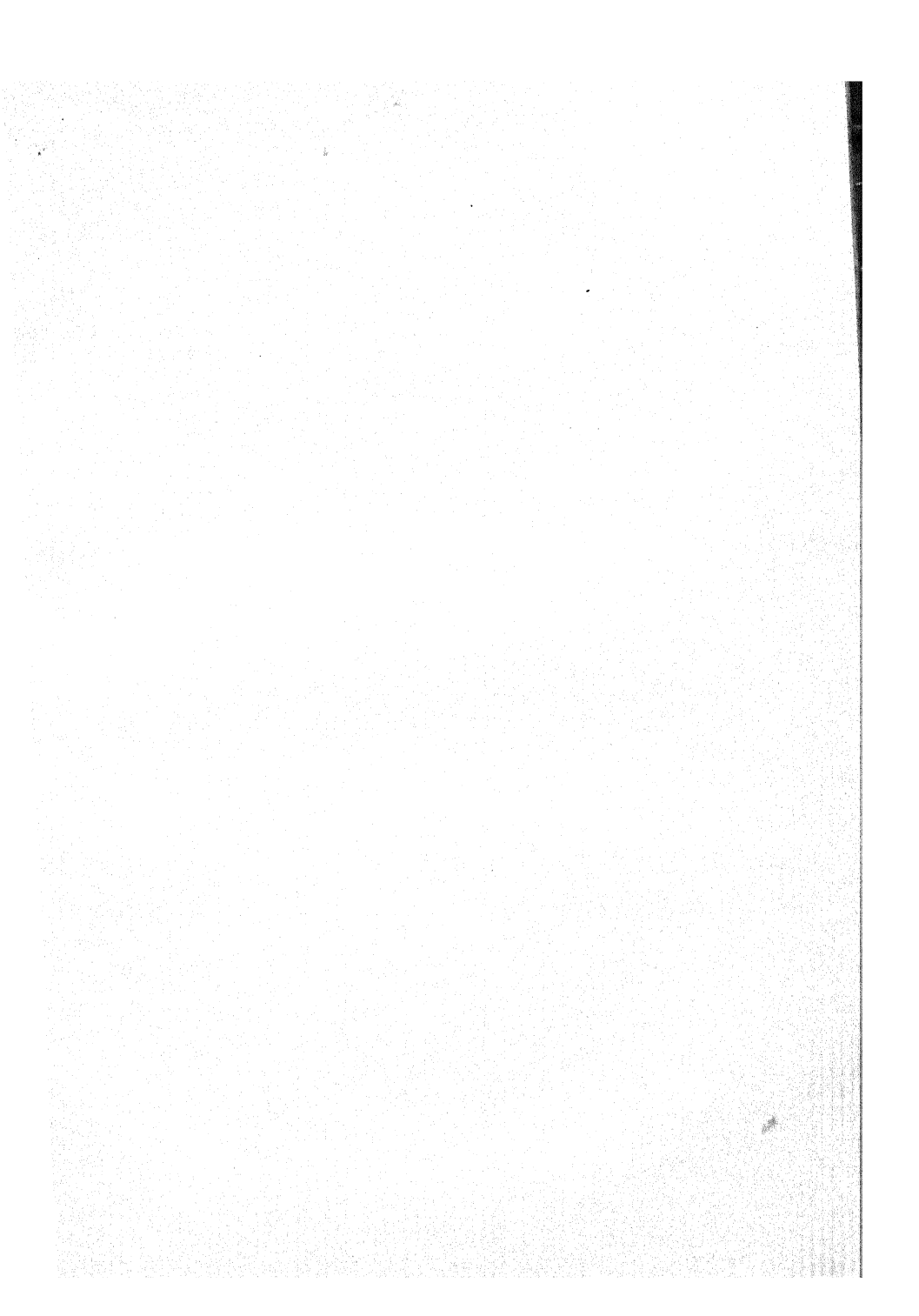
Of Madame Kouzmínsky, Behrs says:

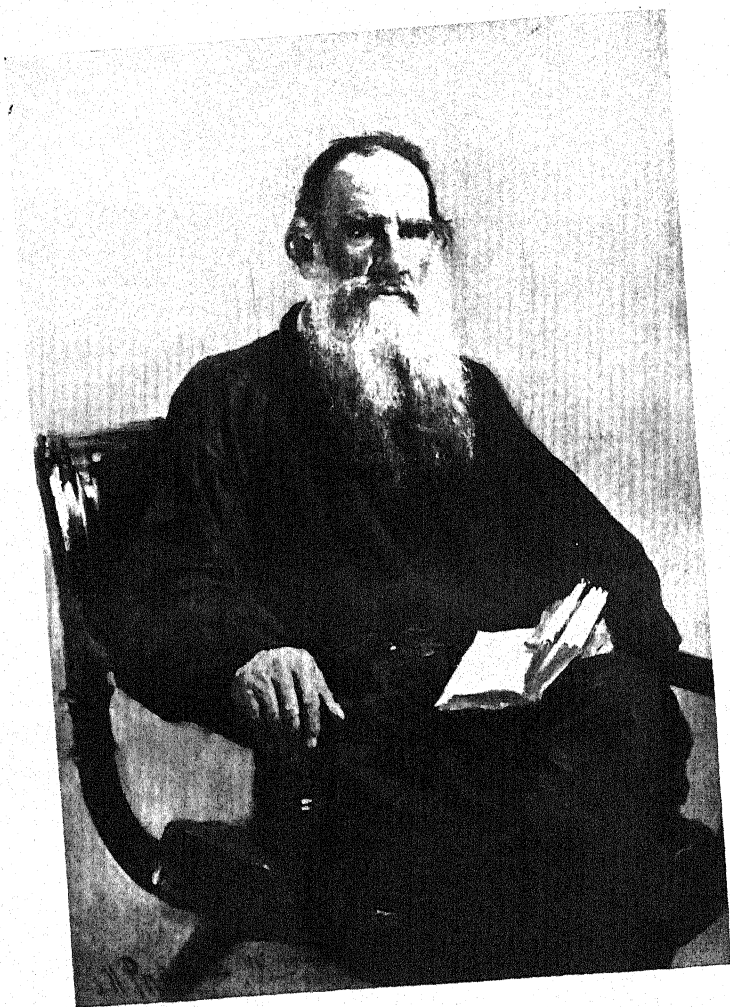
My younger sister, who with her family spends every summer at Yásnaya Polyána, is also one of Leo Nikoláyevitch's sincerest admirers. But though she has a deep reverence for the purity of his belief, and understands the spirit of his teaching, she sees its impracticability, and is not afraid to express her opinions frankly. Leo Nikoláyevitch, for his part, is wont to answer her objections in that sarcastic tone which has now replaced the lively humour that was formerly the great charm of his conversation. I may, perhaps, be allowed to give a slight, but characteristic, example of my sister's mocking attacks, and the quiet sarcasm with which they are parried.

In former days Leo Nikoláyevitch was particularly fond of a certain sweet which we called 'Ankóvsky-pie,' from the name of the good doctor who had given us the recipe.

During my last visit I soon learned that the term had assumed a different meaning, and was now employed by Leo Nikoláyevitch in sarcastic moods, to express his disapproval of our undue hankering after comfort and luxury. I once happened to be with him while he was clearing up and dusting his study. I helped him; and we had thoroughly swept the room out, and were standing on the balcony, brooms in hand, when my younger sister chanced to pass by. A little later, in presence of them all, she laughingly congratulated me on my conversion, and declared she had never seen a more zealous disciple. She went on to relate how she saw the Count and me standing, brooms in hand, and how he made the sign of the cross over me, and, raising his eyes, solemnly asked me, 'Dost thou renounce Ankóvsky-pie and all its evil works?' whereupon I as solemnly replied, 'I do!'

The 23rd September 1887 was Tolstoy's silver wedding-day, but displeased at the festivities which were being prepared for the event, he inquired: 'Is to-morrow really the jubilee of my wedding-day, or is it not rather the jubilee of Ankóvsky-pie?'





RÉPIN'S PORTRAIT OF TOLSTOY, 1887.

When, after eight weeks' stay, Behrs left Yásnaya, Tolstoy, he tells us, 'parted from me coldly, because my life and opinions were in conflict with his teaching.' Nevertheless, Behrs continued to feel profound respect as well as affection for Tolstoy, and says :

All his life long he has done and said only what was true, and therefore often remarks : 'I have no secrets from any one on earth ! All are free to know what I do !'

It was in August or September 1887 that Répin, probably Russia's best artist, painted his first portrait of Tolstoy. Tolstoy sat in an old wadded dressing-gown, which did not prevent his looking like an Old Testament Prophet. Since then Répin, who has become a friend of the family and a frequent visitor, has painted Tolstoy repeatedly.

It was in 1887 that Tolstoy wrote *The Empty Drum*, a folk-tale long current in the region of the Vólga. It is a story after Tolstoy's own heart, admirably expressing the peasants' hatred of military service ; and his rendering of it is an example of the way in which he voices feelings current through long centuries among large sections of mankind. He also wrote an article entitled *What is True in Art*, and began several other things not published till later.

One of these was the tale of Early Christian life, *Walk in the Light While There is Light*. I once asked him what value he set on that work, and he replied : 'I never hear it mentioned without feeling ashamed.' Indeed, it suffers from a fundamental fault. The characters in it are divided into two groups : the bad heathen, and the good Christians. In real life these would inevitably, Tolstoy says, have merged and overlapped. It was this story, or rather the ideas which for a while swayed Tolstoy's mind, and found expression in this story, which accounts for the Colony-founding that, by its failure, has revealed the weakness of one side of Tolstoyism.

Behind all Tolstoy's denunciation of property-holding, Governments, subdivision of labour, etc., there always lies the implication that if these things did not exist, people would live harmoniously and morally. Those who believe this, naturally ask: 'How then are we to arrange our lives?' One answer Tolstoy has given is, 'Go, and live as peasants with the peasants!' But when educated men have tried to do this, they have usually come to the conclusion that those are not the surroundings in which they are able to do their best work. Another suggestion Tolstoy has made is that contained in *Walk in the Light While There is Light*—namely, to form a Community holding his Early-Christian views, and share all things in common.

Various literary societies, universities, and academies had by this time begun to offer Tolstoy honorary memberships, or give him other marks of their esteem. He cares little for such things; they add nothing to the esteem and affection in which he is held by those whom he has taught and helped, and I do not suppose that many of my readers would thank me were I to enumerate the distinctions of that kind that have been conferred upon him. What I cannot avoid mentioning, are the marks of attention of a different kind showered upon him by the Orthodox Russo-Greek Church and by some of its more zealous adherents.

The peasant-writer, S. Semyónof, has told how greatly, as a nineteen-year-old factory workman, he was impressed by the stories the Mediator published, and how when he himself began to write, he submitted his first efforts to Tolstoy and received encouragement. After their first talk, he says: 'I felt I had become much more manly. Life spread out widely before me, and I saw that many problems had arisen for me to solve.'

He returned to his village, and there:

The parish priest explained to my father that I had been

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caught in a net. Leo Tolstoy was a noxious man, and a cunning schemer. He got simple fellows such as myself to write, paid them a few farthings for their works, published these in his own name, and received immense sums for them. My father was so upset by this, that he got drunk, spoke to me as to one who was lost, and began to look with disfavour on all I did.

That is only one instance of what continually occurred in different shapes and forms; and if one is at times startled by the way Tolstoy speaks of the Church, it should be remembered that such was the treatment his efforts to help humanity met with at its hands. It is true that many years later Popóf and a few other Russian priests acknowledged the value of his work; but they were looked at askance by their bishops for so doing, and quickly got into trouble.

Towards the end of 1887 my brother-in-law, Dr. P. S. Alexéyef, returned to Moscow from a visit to America, where he had studied the Temperance movement, which up to that time had attracted very little attention in Russia. He approached Tolstoy, and the latter was much interested in what Alexéyef was able to tell him, and promptly started a Temperance Society in his own house. He signed the pledge, and so did several members of his family; and he has always remained keen on the subject, though like the companion question of food-reform, it does not bulk largely in his writings.

Afterwards Tolstoy called a meeting in the village of Yásnaya Polyána, at which he spoke of the evils of drunkenness, and induced the peasants to promise to abandon both vódka and tobacco. They even sacrificed their pipes, tobacco and tobacco-pouches; but there was much subsequent backsliding among them.

Tolstoy's powers did not usually show themselves to the best advantage in matters of organisation or co-operation. His writings, his personal example and the stimulus and

inspiration he gives, are the things in which he is great. To the cause of Temperance his chief literary contributions (besides *The Imp and the Crust* and *The First Distiller*, which I have already mentioned) were a pamphlet written for the Mediator, and two essays. The first of these essays, called *Culture's Holiday*, appeared in 1889, and was issued apropos of the Moscow University Anniversary (12th January) which is generally celebrated with much feasting and drinking in the restaurants, ending up with general drunkenness, preparatory, in many cases, to gross debauchery.

Against this custom Tolstoy, in *Culture's Holiday*, delivered his philippic. It provoked considerable resentment, and seemingly had little success at the time. But it is just Tolstoy's courage in facing Government and people alike, and lecturing students and professors not less sternly than he lectured dissolute peasants, that has helped to earn him the respect of the world.

But why do I say he is as stern on professors as on peasants? He is much more so! I well remember that he had occasion to comment on a drunken peasant when I was out walking with him one day, and added: 'Ah! but you should see how affectionate they are in their cups! Their fundamental good-nature shows itself then. They are full of kindness and want to embrace you, and are ready to give their souls to serve you.' His way of speaking showed how much he sympathised with tipsy peasants.

His other essay on the question is, *Why Do Men Stupefy Themselves?* (included in *Essays and Letters*). It deals with narcotics as well as stimulants, and contains autobiographical remarks concerning the effect of tobacco on his own work. He wrote it as a preface to a book of Dr. Alexéyef's, published in 1890.

I must not omit to mention that both by conversation and by the distribution of booklets on the subject, he continues, up to to-day, to be an ardent missionary of Temperance; and that, among the peasants in particular,

he has certainly induced a number of people to abjure the use of intoxicants.

It was Dr. Alexéyef who, in Moscow, one winter day in 1888, first took me to see Tolstoy, with whose works I was at that time only superficially acquainted. We found many people assembled in a large upstairs room, simply furnished with a big table, many chairs, and a grand piano. I was struck by the life and animation of the party. After a time, happening to be left alone with Tolstoy at the table, I said :

‘I understand, Leo Nikoláyeitch, that you disapprove of all money-getting? That interests me very much, for I am in Russia to try to earn some money.’ He immediately took up the subject and began to explain his views to me. I remember that, trying to demonstrate the advantages of the factory-system, I said, ‘Well, you will at least admit that it is necessary to have knives?’ ‘Not so necessary as to have bread,’ replied he, and proceeded to insist on the primary duty of each man producing as much and consuming as little as possible. I was not convinced, but was struck by his earnestness and his willingness to explain his views, and (despite a fondness for tripping up his interlocutor by an unexpected remark) the courtesy with which he listened to what one had to say. Alexéyef told me, afterwards, that he had never heard me speak Russian so badly as that evening, and indeed I felt ill-at-ease and conscious that I had no business to be there. Tolstoy, however, said, ‘How clearly and well you express yourself!’—referring, I suppose, to what I said rather than to my accent or inflections—and at parting asked me with emphasis to come and see him again. I did not do so for some years; not until, after reading some of his later books, I had become keenly interested in his views, and anxious to consult him on points that perplexed me.

Then and subsequently, Tolstoy impressed me by his power of vivid, concise and humorous expression, the



keenness of his interest in all sorts of things: people, books, information, games, and work of all kinds, and especially in things of spiritual importance, as also by his tact, and power of putting people at their ease and getting them to talk on subjects they knew something about. Whoever might be present: a peasant-author, an artist, or a prince, he had a word for each, and in his presence all were equal. In fact, Tolstoy's good manners, his power of bringing out the best in people and making them conscious of their own worth, were very noticeable.

As oil lubricates the bearings of a complex machine, so manners should facilitate human intercourse; and in Tolstoy's case they did this without any restriction of the subjects that might be discussed. He is far too intelligent and too much interested in life, to bar out any of the topics which earnest men think about.

It was no small thing, in the 'eighties and 'nineties, that there was at least one house in Moscow where people of all sorts and conditions came together under the influence of one in whom there was nothing base, and who in the days of blackest reaction kept a heart full of hope, and a flaming conviction that iniquity cannot endure, and that the present evils were but transitory. Not in vain does Hope rank as a cardinal virtue!

One of the things for which I, personally, am most grateful to Tolstoy is for taking me and my inquiries seriously, and for his patience in explaining his meaning to me. I vividly remember a scene that took place one day just outside the front door of his Moscow house. Looking at me with his piercing eyes as though he would read my soul, he said: 'Are you sincere?' To which I replied: 'I am not sure that I agree with all that you teach; but my desire to understand you, and to recognise all the good there is in your views, is absolutely sincere.'

On 1st December 1887 Tolstoy wrote to Gay:

I have been in Moscow a week. Here, as in the country, I

continue not working with my pen; and, do you know, this abstinence satisfies and makes me happy. From habit, and from self-love, and from the wish to befog oneself, one wants to write, and to get away from the life around one; but no irresistible force driving me to write is present, and I have got rid of that indulgent judge within me, who formerly approved of anything I scribbled. I abstain from writing, and feel a kind of purity, as one feels from not smoking. Do you still smoke? I do not know how to rejoice sufficiently at having rid myself of that habit.

The last of Tolstoy's children, a son, christened Iván, was born on 31st March, 1888, when Tolstoy was in his sixtieth year, and the Countess in her forty-fourth.<sup>1</sup> The Countess had thirteen children (nine 1888 sons and four daughters), and three miscarriages. Of the children, three died in infancy: one at the age of four, one at seven, and the second daughter, Mary (Másha), Princess Obolénsky, at thirty-five. Five sons and two daughters are still living (1910).

1888 was not one of Tolstoy's strenuous years. When he heard that Gay had set to work earnestly at his picture, 'The Exit from the Last Supper,' he wrote him as follows—ending with a remark about Herzen, that might very well be applied to himself:

You are hard at work, and may God help you at it! It was high time! I say this to myself more than to you; though I also know that when one is accustomed to work at a certain depth of creation, and cannot reach that depth, one cannot force oneself to it. (But then what joy it gives when one does attain it!) I am now in such a state. I have begun a mass of things, and all things I love—only I cannot dive down to the proper depth, but keep floating up to the surface. . . . Lately I have been, and still am, reading Herzen. . . .

<sup>1</sup> Anna Seuron postdates Iván's birth. Speaking of Tolstoy's work in the famine years 1891-2, she says: 'At this time the Lord granted him a son, his youngest and last child, Iván.' This is quite in keeping with her general inaccuracy, against which any one using her book must be constantly on guard.

What a wonderful writer! Russian life for the last twenty years would have been different had he not been hidden from the younger generation [his works prohibited]. He was an important organ, violently extracted from the body politic of Russia.

*Holstomér, the Story of a Horse*, was published in 1888, in one of the magazines. It had been written early in the 'sixties. Almost the only article Tolstoy is known to have completed in 1888, was an essay-letter addressed to a Frenchman, to which the title, *Manual Labour and Mental Activity*, has been given. We get a glimpse of the interest his teaching was arousing at this time, from the following remarks of a doctor who subsequently joined a Tolstoy Colony in Tver. He tells us that it became the custom for a group of students and others to go to Tolstoy's house in Moscow on Thursday evenings:

On those evenings, we had sharp disputes with Tolstoy. . .

I remember, as though it were yesterday, Leo Nikoláyevitch, drawn up to his full height, with flashing eyes, tenaciously defending his point of view against our attacks. How striking he was at such moments, and what a pity it is that no artist was there to sketch him as he then was!

In Tolstoy, a lover of the people and political thinker with a tinge of anarchism, is conjoined with a moralist-philosopher seeking a path for a new religion free from all superstition. Tolstoy himself prized most highly his religio-philosophic ideas. His popularist-political opinions flowed from his religious *Weltanschauung*, but did not occupy the forefront. For us, at that time, however, it was just those populist and anarchist ideas that were most important, and we did not attach particular weight to his religious views. On this difference all our disputes hinged. We, with our views, could not endure that men who professed to be followers of Tolstoy should continue their former easy way of life. Leo Nikoláyevitch maintained that the chief thing was to preserve good relations with those about one, and if this involved remaining in the conditions of one's former well-to-do life, it was better to sacrifice one's spiritual

peace, than to provoke anger and bitterness in those near to one.

A. B. used to reply to Tolstoy with particular harshness, quoting the Gospel text: 'A man's foes shall be they of his own household.'—'And if, for the tranquillity of those near me, it is necessary that I should become a burglar—must I do that also?' asked he indignantly. In vain Tolstoy replied that it all depends on the plane of religious consciousness one has reached. We held to our view, and each time we met the dispute flared up afresh.

Thus two currents of Tolstoyism became more and more distinct. The one, with which our Group (that met at Tolstoy's) sided, might be called the 'Back-to-the-people' tendency. The other had more the nature of a religious movement.

The adherents of that latter current were spiritually nearer to Tolstoy. He considered that they understood him better; and they, on their part, treated him with great respect, amounting sometimes to veneration. For them, almost every thought he expressed was an unquestioned verity.

While the 'Back-to-the-people' Tolstoyans strove with all their might, and in despite of all hardships, to realise Tolstoy's teaching in their lives, the representatives of the other tendency, for the most part, did not in externals abandon their former way of life, except that those who were in the army left the service.

The Tolstoyans who were near him in religio-philosophic opinions have remained till now faithful to their views; but it has not been so with the others: very few of them cling to the path they started on twenty years ago. Most of them have changed their opinions and follow other roads.

To the scheme for organising agricultural Colonies for 'intelligents,' Tolstoy was favourable enough; though, distrusting as he does everything that is artificially arranged, he warned us of the possibility of failure.

Professor I. I. Yánzhoul, an admirer of Tolstoy who was not a Tolstoyan, mentions that, calling on the great man one evening about 8 o'clock, he found him making a pair of boots in a tiny room adjoining his study. Tolstoy

greeted his visitor merrily, and pointed to the study, saying, 'Go in there, please! You will find on the table a pile of American newspapers that have just come. Have a look at them, while I finish this job and wash my hands.'

On the study table Yánzhoul found a bundle of unopened newspapers in various languages, and taking up the largest of them and tearing the wrapper, he found that it was *The Sandusky Times*, hailing from a small but flourishing American town of that name. As soon as he opened it he saw Tolstoy's name several times repeated. It turned out that the paper contained a full report of a sermon preached in the Cathedral Church of Sandusky, and devoted to an account of Tolstoy's rendering of the Gospel. Both the sermon and the newspaper leader thereon contained enthusiastic and dithyrambic laudation of Tolstoy, who was proclaimed to be a thirteenth Apostle, whose teaching was as important as that of the other twelve, and whose Gospel should be read and studied by everybody, etc. etc.

The contrast between the enthusiastic description of Tolstoy's greatness in the American paper, and the humble figure of the Apostle himself who, with sleeves turned up, was sitting on a rough stool in the next room, wearing an apron and diligently and peacefully sewing a boot, was so great that I burst into loud, almost hysterical laughter. Leo Nikoláyevitch, somewhat perturbed, asked what had happened. When I told him what I had read in the *The Sandusky Times* of his elevation to the rank of thirteenth Apostle, he laughed most naturally and merrily, and merely remarked: 'Well, that's really quite American.' He then gravely finished his work and went to wash his hands; and when he returned to the study we had a long talk about various matters, without his even casting a glance at *The Sandusky Times*.

Very characteristic was the following advice Tolstoy one day gave Yánzhoul:

If your starting-point and deductions are sound, never be afraid of practical objections to your logical conclusions. Otherwise you will never say or produce anything *original*!

As to the boots Tolstoy made, I asked a man to whom he had given a pair, and who had worn them, whether they were well made. 'Couldn't be worse,' was his reply; and indeed, I suspect that Tolstoy's bootmaking was of more value as a spiritual sedative than it was as a contribution to the solution of the economic problem.

Of his interest in, and admiration for, Gay's paintings of the life of Christ, frequent mention has been made in this book. His relation to Polyénof's great picture, 'Christ and the Woman taken in Adultery,' was very different. It was in 1888 that that artist, who in his mastery of form and colour was probably Gay's superior, completed the work to which he had devoted himself for years, going specially to Palestine to make studies for it, and working himself ill over it. The picture was being much talked about, and, when it was nearly finished, Tolstoy—though he and Polyénof were not acquainted—called one day to see it. He gazed at it long, and then, pointing to the chief figure, remarked: 'You do not love this one!'

'That is. . . Which one?' ejaculated the artist.

'This one, sitting in the middle. . .'

'But that is Christ!'

'Well, yes. . . You don't love him!' and with those words, Tolstoy departed.

## CHIEF AUTHORITIES FOR CHAPTER IX

Behrs. My quotations are taken for the most part from the Smolensk (1893) edition of his *Recollections*, but the English version, published by Heinemann, London (1893) contains, at the end, some pages not given in the Russian edition. In other respects the English edition is much inferior.

Anna Seuron.

Gay.

Bitovt.

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## CHAPTER X

### NON-RESISTANCE

[1889] Letters to Gay. Walk from Moscow to Yásnaya. *The Kreutzer Sonata*. Non-Resistance. Correspondence with Ballou. 'Injury.' Ruskin. Literary output. *Fruits of Culture*. Christmas at Yásnaya. *The Kreutzer Sonata* finished. Art. Spiritualism. Performance of *Fruits of Culture*. Censorship and Art.

EARLY in 1889 there were signs that Tolstoy's literary Fast was over, and that he was on the point of returning to the practice of Art, from which 1889 (except for his short peasant-stories, his drama, and *Iván Ilyítch*) he had so long abstained. In a letter congratulating Gay on having got to work on an important picture, he writes :

I, too, should like this winter to do something in the line in which I am expert—but apparently God does not wish it. I should like to do it; but even without that, I am happy. I often say to myself, 'Live rejoicing unceasingly in (what no one can anywhere prevent) the joy of doing God's will in purity, humility and love.' And more and more often one succeeds in experiencing that joy when doing work to which one feels oneself irresistibly and indubitably called, as you now are to your present work. . . . Only let it be with purity: free from any lust of gluttony, wine, smoking, sex-desire, or human glory; and in humility—ready always to have one's work abused and oneself shamed; and in love—without anger, chagrin, or the wish to separate oneself from any human being. Then it is very good. And it often is so with me, and I fancy (my heart desires it) that it is so with you too.



Further on in the letter comes a passage suggesting what the subject of the work 'in the line in which I am expert' was to be, when the time came :

Animals have sexual intercourse only when offspring may be born of it. Unenlightened man (such as we all are) is always ready for it, and has even declared it to be a necessity. And this pretended necessity destroys woman, demanding of her when she is with child or nursing, the unnatural activity of a mistress, which overtaxes her strength. We ourselves, by these demands, have destroyed the reasonable nature in woman, and then we complain of her unreasonableness, or we develop her with books and lectures. Yes! In all that relates to his animal nature, man has deliberately to attain to the level of the beasts. And this comes about of itself, when he begins to understand. Till then, the activity of his mind makes only for the perversion of his animal life. I have been thinking much about this, and therefore write of it to you and to your wife.

On 22nd March, appealing once more to Gay to complete his series of illustrations to the Gospels, Tolstoy again expresses the feeling that a true artist, who really has something to say, must use his gifts to say it :

You must produce, and express what has ripened in your soul, for it is something no one but you will ever express. . . .

Yes! As you know, the thing is not that Nikoláy Nikoláevitch [Gay] should be praised, but to feel that one is saying something new and important, and something people need. And when one feels that, and works for that—as you, I hope, are now working—it is the greatest happiness on earth. One is even ashamed of one's privilege.

This view of the duty of expressing in art-forms the feeling that has ripened in one's soul, was evidently not quite in line with the disapproval of art Tolstoy had expressed in the early 'eighties; and one is therefore not surprised to find him at this time at work on the essay that ultimately grew into *What is Art?* It had, in fact,

already simmered in his mind for some years. On the one hand, his conversion had drawn him towards the position of the Puritans who chipped the noses off the statues in the cathedrals, and broke up the organs, because the arts of sculpture and music caused people to cling to Catholic superstitions. On the other hand, he knew the power of art too well not to be aware that by its aid, more easily and potently than in any other way, the feelings dear to him could be made attractive to others. But the complexity of the problem of art, and the difficulty of stating its relation to the rest of life, was such that nearly another ten years passed before he succeeded in elucidating it to his satisfaction.

This spring, after walking from Moscow to Yásnaya, he wrote to Gay on 24th April :

I have been staying for three weeks with Ouróusof. . . . There, in solitude, I got a little writing done. Here I have again dried up. I have, among other things, begun an article on Art, but cannot finish it. But it is not that, that I must write. And I *must* write. There is something I see, that no one else sees. So at least it appears to me. And one must before one dies manage to make others see it. It is the same with you. And to live an honest and clean life, that is to say, not at other people's cost, will not hinder this, but the one effort will help the other.

It was all very well for Tolstoy to repeat that assurance to himself and to others; but he was already over sixty, and his actual experience as he has grown older has been, that when greatly absorbed in literary work, he has not been able to do much physical work. Intermittently he did a fair amount of field-labour, being particularly well situated at Yásnaya for working uninterruptedly either in his study in solitude, or manually in company with the peasants, whose primitive methods of agriculture and building, entailing great expenditure of strength and skill, afforded excellent opportunities for the participation of

one like himself—strong, active, dexterous, and fond of physical exertion.

On 24th June he again wrote to Gay :

X. troubles me, in my weak moments, by being (so it seems to me) dissatisfied with his family life . . . which God forbid ! Believe me—but you know it yourself, my dear friend !—that there are no external circumstances which are good in themselves ; and an unreasonable man married to an angel, and another married to a devil, are equally unhappy ; and that many, in fact almost all the people who are dissatisfied with their marriage (and they all are dissatisfied) consider that nothing could be worse than their position. So it is the same for them all. . . . I am living well, working a little, ploughing, and preparing to mow, and I am writing a good deal, or rather preparing to write : that is to say, writing and blotting out. I am writing a comedy, and a story, and an essay on Art. It is for the most part well with my soul. Indeed it would be a sin were it not so. Seldom a day passes without joyful proofs that the fire which Christ brought to earth is kindling more and more. . . .

It was now that Tolstoy commenced *The Kreutzer Sonata*, a story destined to bring upon his head a storm of ridicule and abuse, and to evoke more controversy than any of his other writings : but one which, at the same time, caused those who knew a piece of masterly work when they saw it, to say, ‘his train has at last come out of its tunnel.’ He had indeed returned to Art—the art, however, as already said—of social and moral experiment.

Before speaking of that extraordinary book, which will be dealt with in the next chapter, the subject of Non-Resistance claims our attention, for on 5th July 1889, Tolstoy wrote a letter on that matter too remarkable to be passed over in silence, and from which I will quote presently.

What is the Tolstoyan doctrine of Non-Resistance ?

He originally arrived at it, as we have seen, from the study of the Sermon on the Mount, and especially from verses 38-41 of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel :

'Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth ; but I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil : but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.'

In the ultimate form to which Tolstoy developed it, the doctrine of Non-Resistance means that *no physical force must be used to compel any man* to do what he does not want to do, or to make him desist from doing what he likes. This involves disapproval of all central or local Governments that employ a policeman, as well as of all Criminal or Civil Law proceedings, and all collection of rates or taxes not purely voluntary, as well as of the defence of life or property by physical force. This disapproval applies even when one acts as trustee for others. One must not use, or cause others to use, physical force to prevent a man from committing forgeries, even though they may involve a whole community in confusion and misery. In fact, the principle presupposes a society quite differently organised to any that we know ; and I believe it has never worked even moderately well, except in cases such as Tolstoy's own, where life continued to flow along its accustomed lines, because there were people at hand willing to take on themselves the sin of Resistance.

It should be borne in mind that the view Tolstoy holds, though it may never before have been stated in quite the same way, or pushed to quite such sweeping conclusions, is a very ancient one, and has been held by many sects in many lands.

In fact, in any society in which efforts towards social improvement are suppressed by brute force, it is natural for reformers to voice their detestation of violence by the

proclamation of Non-Resistant principles. Physical force is so often the instrument of oppression, that there is a natural inclination to identify the one with the other.

At any rate, whether it be reasonable or not, when men morally in advance of their generation feel themselves called on to denounce existing wrongs supported by custom, and by the laws and Constitution of their country, they are very apt, not merely to announce that their warfare is not waged with carnal weapons, and that they mean neither to kill nor injure any one, but also to lay it down as a rule, that good men rely exclusively on appeals to reason and conscience, whereas bad men rely on appeals to physical force, and that one may judge the goodness of a cause by the means used to forward it.

They are apt to say that to use physical force proves one to be in the wrong, while to rely on mental and moral force shows that one is in the right. I have already referred to the typical case of William Lloyd Garrison, who took up very nearly that position when he attacked Slavery in America. In Tolstoy's case, as in other similar ones, it is impossible to overlook the fact that this position, which he held quite sincerely and instinctively, suited his purpose admirably. He proclaimed to the world that his was a moral and religious cause; and he denounced the use of physical force. He also denounced the established Orthodox Russo-Greek Church, as well as the Government that supported it, and especially the whole system of military service: that most colossal example of the subordination of reason and conscience to physical force.

The Government and the Church were in no condition to argue with him. Their sins were too glaring; and much, if not all, in his argument was too unanswerable. But suppose that without answering him they had suppressed him—exiled or imprisoned him—what point that would have given to his contention! The use of Cossacks or gendarmes against him would have appeared a palpable

proof of the justice of his argument, besides making everybody eager to read the books that caused him to be arrested.

In some details, the Non-Resistance of Garrison differed from that of Tolstoy, and both their theories differed somewhat from that of the Rev. Adin Ballou; but the fact remains that similar circumstances caused all these able and sincere men to adopt similar opinions, and that they had behind them, possibly the teaching of Jesus, and certainly the belief of large religious communities existing in various countries and ages.

When writing *What do I Believe?*—in which Tolstoy formulated his belief in Non-Resistance—he knew that the beliefs he had arrived at had been, to some extent, expressed by Origen, Tertullian, and other Fathers of the Church, besides being held, more or less, by such sects as the Mennonites, Herrnhuters, and Quakers, who refuse to take part in war. But after the publication of that book he was delighted to learn, from correspondents in America and Bohemia and elsewhere, that other people had expressed, and were still expressing, similar beliefs. The works of the Rev. Adin Ballou were sent him by the Rev. L. G. Wilson, to whom Tolstoy replied, referring enthusiastically to Ballou as: ‘one of the chief benefactors of humanity.’ Of Ballou’s writings he said: ‘In those tracts I found all the objections that are generally made against Non-Resistance victoriously answered, and I found also the true basis of the doctrine. . . .’ Yet even Ballou did not go far enough to satisfy Tolstoy, and he adds:

The comments that I wish to make on Mr. Ballou’s explanation of the doctrine are: First, that I cannot agree with the concession he makes for employing violence against drunkards and insane people. The Master made no concessions, and we can make none. We must try, as Mr. Ballou puts it, to make impossible the existence of such people, but if they do exist, we must use all possible means, and sacrifice ourselves, but

not employ violence. A true Christian will always prefer to be killed by a madman, than to deprive him of his liberty. Secondly, [I am dissatisfied] that Mr. Ballou does not decide more categorically the question of *property*, for a true Christian not only cannot claim any rights of property, but the term *property* cannot have any significance for him. All that he uses, a Christian only uses till somebody takes it from him. He cannot defend his property, so he cannot have any. Thirdly, I think that for a true Christian the term 'government' (very properly defined by Mr. Ballou) cannot have any signification and reality. Government is, for a Christian, only regulated violence; Governments, States, nations, property, Churches, all these for a true Christian are only words without meaning; he can understand the meaning other people attach to those words, but for him they have none. . . . No compromise! The Christian principle must be pursued to its full extent, to enable it to support practical life. The saying of Christ that, '*If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me,*' was true in his time, and is true in ours; a follower of Christ must be ready to be poor and to suffer; if not, he cannot be his disciple, and Non-Resistance implies it all. Moreover, for a Christian the *necessity* of suffering is a great good, because otherwise we could never know if what we are doing is done for God, or for ourselves.

The application of every doctrine is always a compromise, but the doctrine in theory cannot allow compromises. Although we know we can never draw a mathematically straight line, we must never make another definition of a straight line than 'the shortest distance between two points. . . .'

'*I am come to send fire on earth, and what will I, if it be already kindled?*' I think that this time is coming, and that the world is on fire, and our business is only to keep ourselves burning, and, if we can, to communicate with other burning points: that is the work I intend to do for the rest of my life. Many thanks for your letter, and for Mr. Ballou's portrait and books. Please tell him that I deeply respect and love him, and that his work did great good to my soul, and I pray and hope that I may do the same to others.—Your brother in Christ,

LEO TOLSTOY.

Ballou replied to this letter, thanking Tolstoy for his approval and fraternal sympathy; but adding:

I am an old man of little distinction or fame in the world, and must soon pass into the realm of the Invisible where the ambitions of this world are of small account. . . .

I have candidly considered your exceptions to some of my definitions and qualifications of Christian Non-Resistance, and . . . I desire briefly to defend my position as against yours. In this I am sure you will indulge me.

1. You say, 'I cannot agree with the concession that he makes for employing violence against drunkards and insane people. The Master made no concessions, and we must make none.' I made no concessions for employing *violence* in any case; but for employing uninjurious, benevolent physical force, in the cases alluded to, where the absolute welfare of all the parties concerned should be scrupulously regarded. I make no concession to killing, injuring, or harming any human being. What I approved is not only sanctioned but dictated by the law of pure good-will. This class of cases includes all cases of delirium, partial delirium, and passional outrage wherein the assailant, as well as the victim, will have reason for thankfulness that beneficent restraint and prevention was imposed. There are multitudes of such cases in human experience; and the employment of beneficent physical restraint in such cases must not be confounded with the popular doctrine that it is right to employ deadly physical force against human offenders and enemies. This is the resistance of evil which Christ forbade. . . .

2. You say, 'The Master made no concessions, and we must make none.' True; he made no concessions allowing us to employ vindictive, or deadly, or harmful force against our human offenders and enemies, and we must make none. The use and employment of such forces had been sanctioned by law and custom from time immemorial, as necessary and right for the resistance of evil-doers. . . . But Christ uncompromisingly prohibited it. What then? Did he ever prohibit the resistance of evil by uninjurious and beneficent forces of any kind, physical or moral? Never! And to construe his pre-



cept, 'Resist not evil,' as meaning absolute passivity to all manner of evil, because he made no specific qualifications, is to ignore the context and make him the author of self-evident absurdity. The context clearly shows what kind of resistance of evil had been sanctioned by law and custom, and what he meant to abrogate. . . .

3. You say, 'The application of every doctrine is always a compromise,' etc. I am not sure that I understand this statement. If I do, it means that no doctrine, or theory, or precept can be carried out in practice without compromise. If this be your meaning, I must dissent. In ethics, I think no doctrine, theory, or prescribed duty is sound that cannot be put in practice uncompromisingly. And it seems to me to be a dangerous concession to make to human tergiversation, that a moral precept, strictly right, is expected to be compromised in application to actual practice. Religionists and moralists the world over have ever been professing to hold sacred many great precepts—such as the Second Commandment [of Christ] and the Golden Rule—yet wholly violating them on this very ground that, as the world is, they cannot be applied and lived out without compromise. Should we—Non-Resisters—go and do likewise?—be rigid in statement of our doctrine, yet lax and inconsistent in practice?

4. You say, 'True Christians will always prefer to be killed by a madman rather than to deprive him of his liberty.' And by parity of reason from the same principle, I suppose you must say, a true Christian, if watching with a delirious sick man, would prefer to see him kill his wife, children, and best friends, rather than restrain or help restrain him, by uninjurious physical force, of his insane liberty. What precept of Christ makes insane liberty thus sacred? Or what dictate of enlightened reason, humanity, or fraternal love demands such conduct towards the insane?

5. You say, 'A true Christian not only cannot claim any rights of property, but the term "property" cannot have any significance for him; all that he uses, a Christian only uses until somebody takes it from him.' But food, raiment, and shelter are necessities of mortal existence, to Christians as human beings. They are indispensable material goods to this

extent at least. Jesus said, 'Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.' If they are necessities of mortal life, they certainly have a very important 'signification.' Jesus said, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.' When they have been 'added' to true Christians according to the will of the Father, whose are they? Are they not the rightful property of those who possess them—to whom God has 'added' them—as truly theirs as their bodily faculties, for the just use of which they are morally responsible, and which no human beings have any right to deprive them of by fraud or force?

Yet you say, 'A true Christian cannot claim any rights of property. . . . All that he uses, a Christian only uses till somebody takes it from him.' But has anybody a right to take it from him at will? Is there no such thing as theft, robbery, extortion, or crime against property, against which a true Christian may protest? On the other hand, is there no such thing as a true Christian having any property to give away in alms or charity, according to Christ's injunctions? I do not so understand Christ or the dictates of reason, or the law of love.

6. You say, 'Government is, for a Christian, only regulated violence. . . . Governments, States, nations, property, Churches—all these, for a true Christian, are only words without meaning,' etc. But these are realities; we cannot ignore them as nonentities. They are outgrowths from nature, however crude and defective. Man is a social being by natural constitution. He is not and never can be a solitary, independent, individual being. He must, and will be inevitably more or less a Socialist. Families, Governments, States, nations, Churches, and communities always have existed and always will. Christ came to establish the highest order of governmental association, a purely fraternal social order—a Church 'against which the gates of hell should not prevail.' For this he lived and died. No-Governmentism, non-organisationism, sheer individualism, is no part of true Christianity. It is impossible, unnatural—a chaos. We should aim, with our Master, to transform by the moral force of divine, fundamental principles uncompromisingly lived out, all barbaric, semi-barbaric, and unchristian social

organisations into his ideal one, the true Church, wherein the greatest are least and all in unity of spirit with him, as he is with the universal Father. . . . These are my highest convictions of truth and righteousness. . . .

On 26th March 1890, Tolstoy replied to Ballou :

DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,—I will not argue with your objections. It would lead to nothing. Only one point, that I did not put clearly enough in my last letter, I might explain to avoid misunderstandings. It is about compromise. I said that compromise, inevitable in practice, cannot be admitted in theory. What I meant is this :

. . . The great sin is to compromise in *theory*—to lower the ideal of Christ [in order] to make it attainable. And I consider the admission of force (be it even benevolent) over a madman (the great difficulty is, to give a strict definition of a madman) to be such a theoretical compromise. In not admitting this compromise I run the risk only of my death, or the death of other men who can be killed by the madman; but death in fulfilling the will of God is a blessing (as you put it yourself in your book); but if I admit the compromise, I run the risk of acting quite contrary to the law of Christ—which is worse than death. . . . With deep veneration and tender love, I remain your friend and brother,

LEO TOLSTOY.

It is interesting to note that Ballou, whom Tolstoy calls 'a champion of Non-Resistance who devoted fifty years of life to its propaganda by word and print,' does not understand Christ's injunction as Tolstoy understands it; and this brings us back to the question: Are we primarily concerned to decide what Jesus taught on the subject, or to decide what is right and wrong about the question itself, independently of what Jesus, or any one else, may have said, or may have been reported to say?

If it be the former question, it cannot here be adequately discussed, for, apart from the question whether we are bound to accept his decisions, we should have: (1) to face the question of the reliability and completeness of

the reports of Christ's teaching that have come down to us; (2) to decide whether it is possible to decide exactly what he did teach; and (3) to ascertain whether he had in mind the same political and social problems as face us.

I prefer to deal with the simpler problem: What is true about the use of physical force? and to leave the more complex problem of what Christ taught about it, to others. But I may make just this remark: Assuming the record of Christ's teaching to be correct and sufficiently complete, I am forced to the conclusion that he did *not* mean what Tolstoy thinks he meant; for among the illustrations of the doctrine, immediately after those of turning the other cheek and not going to law (on which Tolstoy relies) come the words: 'And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain.' Now no one who knew how to use language, as the writer of the Sermon on the Mount unquestionably did, and who wished specially to emphasise the duty of not using *physical force* even in extreme cases, could have been so inept as to introduce an illustration which has nothing to do with the case, and which can only divert attention from the question of physical force to the question of good-will and kindness. As far as the Gospel record is concerned, that, to my mind, is conclusive. But it leaves the larger question untouched, and Tolstoy may have discovered a truth not enunciated in the Gospels. Has he done so?

He thinks we should never use physical force to restrain our fellow-man. (He has sometimes incidentally remarked that this should apply to animals also.) Ballou, as his books show, thinks you must never use 'injurious force' to your fellow-men; and by 'injurious force' he means:

Any moral influence or physical force exerted by one human being upon another, the legitimate effect of which is to destroy or impair life, to destroy, or impair, the physical faculties, to destroy, impair, or pervert the moral and religious sentiments, or to destroy and impair the absolute welfare, all things con-

sidered, of the person on whom such influence or force is exerted; whether that person be innocent or guilty, harmless or offensive, injurious or uninjurious, sane or insane, adult or infant.

In a vigorous passage he explains that it is not a man's own imaginations, thoughts and feelings, that determine what is or is not injurious to him :

It is not man's imaginations, thoughts and feelings, that determine what is or is not injurious to him. Love itself may 'heap coals of fire on a man's head.' Truth may torment his mind. The most benevolent restraint may be painful to his feelings. . . . Such people often prefer an *injury* to a benefit. . . . Their wills, feelings, and opinions are not the indices of their own *good*, much less that of others.

Is it good for a wicked man, under specious hypocritical disguises, to perpetrate the most atrocious mischief, unexposed and unproved? These things are not good for mankind. On the contrary, it is good for them to be crossed, restrained, and reproved, by all uninjurious moral and physical forces, which benevolence prompts and wisdom dictates.

. . . Cannot unreasonable children be nursed, delirious adults controlled . . . hypocrites exposed, and sinners reproved without inflicting injury on them ! Then can nothing good be done without doing evil. Imperfection is indeed incidental to all human judgment and conduct; and therefore . . . some mistakes and some accidental injuries might happen. But the reason and common-sense of mankind, once fairly pledged to the true principle of action, would seldom fail to discharge these duties to general satisfaction.

Tolstoy's view has one great advantage over Ballou's (as well as over the view that I myself hold) for if he be right, we have a quite clear, rigid, and, so to say, *mechanical* test of right and wrong. You need not go into motives—which are always complex and baffling—nor need you ask who has forged, or slain, or stolen; the mere, bare fact that one man is holding another, or employing the law to hold him, shows at once that the man who holds is a

wrong-doer, and that the man who is held is a victim of anti-Christian violence.

If it were so, life would no doubt be much simpler, and we should escape the hesitation and regret that often accompany the question: 'Did I judge So-and-so's motives rightly?' But alas! life and human conduct are complex matters, and to reduce them to conformity with external tests is impossible.

Tolstoy's statement of the case has the advantage of being much the most far-reaching, and much the simplest and most easily applied. It has only two disadvantages: first, that it throws all human affairs into confusion, and secondly, that it is not true.

Adin Ballou has thought the question out much better, and carries us part-way to the real solution, which is admirably suggested by a memorable passage in Ruskin's *Munera Pulveris*:

We must understand the real meaning of the word, 'injury.'

We commonly understand by it, any kind of harm done by one man to another; but we do not define the idea of harm: sometimes we limit it to the harm which the sufferer is conscious of; whereas much the worst injuries are those he is *unconscious* of; and, at other times, we limit the idea to violence, or restraint; whereas much the worst forms of injury are to be accomplished by indolence, and the withdrawal of restraint.

'Injury' is then simply the refusal, or violation, of any man's right or claim upon his fellows; which claim is mainly resolvable into two branches: a man's claim not to be hindered from doing what he should; and his claim to be hindered from doing what he should not. . . .

Now, in order to a man's obtaining these two rights, it is clearly needful that the worth of him should be approximately known, as well as the *want* of worth, which has, unhappily, been usually the principal subject of study for critic law. . . .

But we still have not got quite to the heart of the matter. The true doctrine of Non-Resistance I take to be

this—and I ask my readers to weigh it as a matter of first-rate importance :

The old law of ‘an eye for an eye,’ and the desire to give a man two black eyes for being blind, is not merely wrong, but also stupid. By desiring to injure others we unquestionably and inevitably injure ourselves. We should obliterate from our minds *all* feeling of revenge, and should not wish to injure any one, not even a homicidal maniac. If we can cure him, and make a good citizen of him, so much the better ; but there may be cases (a diminishing number, I hope) in which it may be necessary regretfully to kill him, not ‘because he deserves it,’ nor because we wish to hurt him, but in order, for instance, to prevent his steering a ship on to the rocks and causing all the passengers and crew to perish as well as himself. Our business is, as much as we can, to promote harmony, goodwill, and good order among all men. In doing that, we need all our faculties : moral, mental, and physical ; and I know of no *external* rule of conduct that can safely be applied to relieve us of the difficulty of using our judgment—even in complex and difficult cases about which we are far from feeling quite sure that our judgment is right.

The principle is clear and *always* applicable, and the more fully and immediately it is applied, the better for us all. We want to get things right in the world, and the true contrast is not between injuring our fellows or renouncing the use of physical force : it is between wishing to injure and wishing to aid.

Tolstoy’s test applies to the action ; my test applies to the motive. He has argued the matter at such length and in so many books, that it would more than fill this volume to answer him point by point ; but I think that any reasonable man who once grasps the principle can find for himself the reply to each and all of Tolstoy’s special arguments. I will therefore here deal only with two, on which he lays great stress, and which he often repeats.

He says that if you strike a man to prevent his committing an outrage, you know you do evil by striking him, but you cannot know that he would have actually committed the outrage. Perhaps at the last instant he might have died or repented. Granted! But that only implies that our judgment is fallible. Is that a reason for not using it? If we are not to use it, what was it given us for? When a man sows corn, he does not know that it will grow. Sometimes it doesn't; and it is clearly an evil to waste time and seed on sowing corn that perishes. But men sow corn because they think (and on the whole think rightly) that it will probably come up; and a man knocks down a drunken man who is kicking a child, and whom he cannot otherwise restrain, because it seems to him probable that if the man goes on kicking the child with his thick boots, the child will get hurt. Perhaps the child would not; but the intervener's error is, at worst, an error of judgment, and not of morals. It is never wrong for a man to *do the best he can* under the circumstances in which he finds himself, and to use the faculties he possesses.

Another of Tolstoy's arguments is that we must assert that physical force should never be used, even in cases in which a man feels that he *ought* to use it, for if we once admit any exception to the rule, it breaks to pieces and all sorts of violence will go on being practised in the world.

It is sad that a thinker and moralist of Tolstoy's calibre should tumble down like this to the level of the expediencies, evasions, and pusillanimities of the most ordinary pulpit. Obviously the real question is: Is it true? And not, What will happen if we admit it? And, obviously, insistence on overstating a case so that an ordinary man's common-sense revolts against it, does not, and will not, act as a restraining influence on those inclined to violence. They will simply continue to do what they



do now : reject the whole doctrine, including the parts of it that are true.

The fact of the matter is that Tolstoy is not really Non-Resistant in the profoundest sense of the term. He tries to obtain a spiritual result by insisting on a negative rule and an external test. He has rightly and sincerely gone into partnership with the Deity to make smooth the rough places of the earth, but he is so over-strenuous that he does not leave his partner a fair share of the work.

Again, with reference to the enforcement of law, it is quite a fallacy—at least as far as Constitutional countries are concerned—to speak as though the law were usually enforced on an unwilling population by the police, for the benefit of the wealthy and governing classes. As a matter of fact, the police, in England for instance, are not numerous enough to maintain any sort of order, were it not that they have on their side the great bulk of the population, and that, at any moment, a large force of special constables would, if necessary, volunteer to support the law.

It is because men are accustomed to the benefits of law, and are sure that it will not break down, that they are able to devote so much attention to pointing out the flaws—often, admittedly, very gross and very shameful flaws—there are in it.

I have dealt with this subject so fully, because, in his later years, Tolstoy has devoted a great deal of space to it; and the published replies to him have, for the most part, been very inadequate, and frequently err by attempting to justify the use of vindictive violence.

I am convinced that Tolstoy's misstatement of the theory of Non-Resistance has served, more than anything else, to conceal from mankind his greatness as a thinker, and I always regret to find people devoting special attention to that side of his teaching. It is excusable, and perhaps inevitable, that a strenuous man, opposing great evils, should lose his balance on some points, and write things

Tom, Dick, and Harry can see to be wrong. And though Tolstoy constantly contrasts the Law of Love with the Law of Force, disapproving of the latter *in toto*, and including in his disapproval the policeman who regulates the traffic and removes the drunken sailor who blocks it, we need not let this divert our attention too long from the many profound things he says with such admirable force and lucidity.

The most important parts of a man's work are generally the things about which he is right; and we should use our prophets as we use our mines, seeking and valuing the veins of rich ore, and wasting as little time as possible on the sand and earth we encounter in our search.

Tolstoy's writings in 1889 included the Preface to some *Recollections of Sevastopol* written by Ershóf, and already alluded to. This was not an article the Censor would pass, and therefore could not be used for its original purpose, and long remained unpublished; but it is one that all should read who wish to understand how Tolstoy's abhorrence of war grew out of his own experience. It throbs with the pulse of reality. One feels that when writing it Tolstoy, as he says, 're-experienced what we lived through thirty-four years ago.'

Contrary to their practice since 1882, the family did not move to Moscow for the winter of 1889, or for some years subsequently.

During the latter part of the year Tolstoy was at work on *The Kreutzer Sonata*, and also on his comedy, *Fruits of Culture*.

The character of Zvezdintsef, the wealthy and aristocratic spiritualist in that play, was drawn from a man named Lvof, of whom Anna Seuron tells us:

In 1886 died the spiritualist, Lvof, well known to all Moscow. He belonged to one of the best Russian families [there are several untitled Russian families, of more account than most of

those with titles] was very rich, highly educated, and occupied a greatly respected position in Moscow society. He had a hobby—Spiritualism—and people stood open-mouthed when he began to speak on his favourite subject. Spiritualistic séances were held at his house, and were attended by able and distinguished people of all classes.

One day in March, Lvof called at the Tolstoys', and the conversation turned on death, a subject about which Tolstoy—always so ardent, and so deeply moved by what his mind dwells on—was then profoundly agitated. Anna Seuron says :

Lvof was of opinion that no one dies, and he was convinced that three days after his death he would be smoking a cigarette in his study, invisible to others, but himself seeing all and everybody. The actual moment of death did not seem to him at all terrible. He ceased speaking and stirred his tea. Suddenly he turned to me and said, in choicest French, 'Madame Seuron, be witness that I to-day invite the Count to be present, if possible, at my hour of death, that he may see that, like falling asleep, that last step is a normal one.'

Next day Lvof was unwell ; a day later he was seriously ill, and on the third day he sent for Tolstoy. All this happened in Moscow, where their houses were near one another, though Lvof's, facing one of the boulevards, was much the larger and finer of the two.

But the Count did not go. 'Ah ! Ah !' groaned he, shifting from one foot on to the other. That was a characteristic sign—he did not wish to believe, did not wish to know, wished to put aside the unpleasant impression of death. He hid himself, like an ostrich, in the sand. . . . And only when we heard that Lvof was no more, did he make up his mind to go and stand for a moment beside his still warm body. . . .

Tolstoy did not say a word about that death, for he always knew how to ignore all that he found unpleasant, and I think Lvof's death made an impression on him by its unexpectedness. That evening's talk was still quite fresh in his

memory, when suddenly the discussed event occurred. Tolstoy is superstitious. How often has it happened that he recounted his dreams and listened attentively if any one interpreted them as having a meaning. He also believes in fortune-telling by cards, etc. [This only means that Tolstoy, brought up among superstitious people, has never quite shaken off a sort of feeling that there may be something in it. It counts for nothing in his conduct or opinions.] Finally there was something else that militated against Lvof in Tolstoy's eyes: Lvof's wife once treated Tolstoy's own wife with some arrogance, and the occurrence left an indelible trace.

'Lvof looked on spiritualism simply as a diversion,' said Tolstoy one day. 'To support and develop that belief, other capacities must operate than the disintegrated atoms that whirl about in Lvof's brain!'

It was Lvof and Lvof's household that now, nearly four years later, supplied Tolstoy with the theme and background for his comedy. He had once attended a séance there, at which P. I. Samárin (Sahátov in the play), a sceptic, had caught hold of a hand in the dark—but nothing clear had come of it. Readers of the play will remember the use made of that incident.

It was arranged that the play should be performed at Yásnaya during the New-Year holidays.

Accounts written by some of the performers give us glimpses of what life was like at that holiday gathering. The five elder Tolstoy children were then from 26 to 18 years old.

One of the actors was A. V. Zinger, a lad of nineteen, who then was visiting Yásnaya for the first time. He tells us:

On my arrival I found myself at a large tea-table, at which all the Tolstoy family were assembled, with relations and visitors who had come there for the holidays.

Among strangers, many of them grown-up young ladies, I had a painful feeling of bashfulness, from which I was skilfully saved by the simple, merry conversation of Tatiána

Lvónna, who played the part of chief hostess among the group of young people. . . . She also directed the arrangements as to costumes, accessories, scenery, etc.

Tolstoy, when a young man, had known Zinger's father, a Moscow Professor of Mathematics, a study followed by A. V. Zinger also. At the breakfast-table next morning,

Tolstoy entered, gay and kindly, and joined us, speaking first to one, and then to another of the large, chiefly female, company. . . . Addressing me, he turned the talk to mathematics, saying :

'I think I should have made a very good teacher of mathematics—just because I am very fond of the subject, but have great difficulty in understanding anything in it clearly. To understand, I have to think it over this way and that; and what I have once understood, I can explain to any one, because I can foresee all the difficulties. . . .'

'Aye, aye, aye! . . . But that's not the thing!' said he, when I took out a cigarette and lit it. 'Why do you do that?'

Abashed, I tried to justify myself on the score that smoking assists concentration and clearness of thought.

'No, no! It's just the other way!' said Leo Nikoláyevitch, 'I know it so well! The reason one seems to think more easily when one smokes, is just because one's critical faculties get befogged. . . . And if you add a glass of vódka to it . . . then it's quite bad.'

After the morning coffee, Leo Nikoláyevitch would go to his study, taking with him the MS. of the play, which he altered and added to every day, right up to the performance. . . . Work on the preparations hummed from morning to night for a whole week. One of the rehearsals was at N. V. Davýdof's in Tóula, and the Yásnaya half of the troupe drove there in a whole caravanserai of sledges. . . .

On other days, by way of recreation, an animated crowd of young people slide down the hills on small hand-sledges, and skate on the pond. Returning to the house, I find a stove being put up on the stage for the second Act. In one corner of the large room, the curtains and hangings are being sewn; in

another the freshly altered MS. is being compared with the separate parts. Laughter constantly breaks out: the new additions seem particularly humorous. . . .

The day of the performance draws near, but there is still no end of work to be done. We sit up till late at night. In the middle of the night we ask for a *samovár* to be heated to make tea, and we arrange to go sledging by moonlight, to refresh ourselves.

'Do whatever you like,' says Tatiána Lvónna, 'only don't disturb the servants, or, if he hears of it, Papa will be displeased.' . . .

For the last rehearsal but one, V. M. Lopátin, whom we had awaited for the rôle of Third Peasant, came to Yásnaya. His poses, gesticulations and speech were admirable. After his inimitable way of saying, 'We've so little land . . . we've no room, let's say, even to keep a hen,' the rehearsal was interrupted by peals of laughter, and Leo Nikoláyevitch was in raptures.

The part of Tánya was well acted by her namesake, Tatiána Lvónna, and Mary Lvónna was admirable as the cook.

Two days before the performance, a reading of the just-finished manuscript of *The Kreutzer Sonata* is arranged.

There is such a turmoil in the whole house on account of the play, that it is difficult to find a convenient corner for the reading; so the Countess Sophia Andréyevna allows us to use her bedroom.

Some fifteen of us assemble in the small room, and Leo Nikoláyevitch himself joins us.

M. A. Stahóvitch settles at a small table with two candles, and with an animated expression reads the introductory chapter; but when he reaches the plot he is taken aback, in the presence of young ladies, by the realism of the language. He stops.

'Countess, I cannot read it without omissions. . . .' says he.

'I expected that,' replies she. 'The girls have no business to be here.'

'Read on, read on!' says Leo Nikoláyevitch, who is listening attentively; 'but it will really be better to let the girls go away.'

The young ladies depart, and the reading continues.

Leo Nikoláyevitch takes Stahóvitch's place, and himself reads the passages where he has scribbled in many fresh insertions, difficult to read. . . .

After this reading we sit at the tea-table agitated and dazed. Detached comments on the impression received are uttered disputes flare up. Leo Nikoláyevitch enters.

'Ah, how glad I should be,' says he, 'if you would speak about *The Kreutzer Sonata* as though I were not here.'

But this does not come off. After a while some one, mustering courage, remarks: 'The impression is too oppressive. Could you not have given us something positive?'

'Really?' said Leo Nikoláyevitch. 'Tell you how well they lived, how they had children and grandchildren, and how they died in the arms of their great-grandchildren? And produce a German fairy-tale, such as the thousands that have been written without teaching anybody anything?'

'In a work of art,' added Leo Nikoláyevitch, 'it is indispensable that the artist should give something new, and of his own. It is not how it is written that really matters. People will read *The Kreutzer Sonata* and say, "Ah, that is the way to write. . . ." 'They were travelling by train, and conversed. . . .'" The indispensable thing is to go beyond what others have done, to pick off even a very small, fresh bit. . . . But it won't do to be like my friend Fet, who at sixteen wrote: "The spring bubbles, the moon shines, and she loves me"; and who went on writing and writing, and at sixty wrote: "She loves me, and the spring bubbles, and the moon shines!"'

V. M. Lopátin, who took the rôle of Third Peasant, was a Justice of the Peace. He has narrated how, after a rehearsal in Toúla, he drove with a large sledge party to Yásnaya. He says:

We galloped merrily along the smooth high-road, past the picturesque woods of Kozlówka-Záseka which rose on both

sides of the way ; and late at night, tired by the drive and the keen frosty air, we gladly entered the comfortable and hospitably lit-up house at Yásnaya Polyána.

We were heartily welcomed by our hosts. A well-spread supper table awaited us. But intoxicants were conspicuously absent, their place being ostentatiously taken by decanters of kvas. We, frozen travellers, experienced a feeling akin to disillusionment ; but the foresight of one of our party had secured in Toúla a supply of what was not allowed at Yásnaya, and we escaped cautiously, in turn, to the entrance-hall, and there, in a corner under the stairs (repressing a feeling of confusion and the gnawings of conscience) we warmed ourselves with drams of vódka.

Lopátin's practice had brought him into frequent contact with just such peasants as those in the play ; and he was able to throw himself heartily into his rôle. At the rehearsal, he says :

I felt I was succeeding, and soon heard Leo Nikoláyevitch's laugh—a quite Russian, peasant laugh, full of good-natured sincerity—followed by words of approval. . . . My acting evidently produced on him an impression exceeding my expectations. He was satisfied with it, and this satisfaction expressed itself in such almost childlike glee as quite abashed me.

He laughed to tears, imparted his reflections to those about him with animation, slapped his sides, and good-humouredly wagged his head, peasant-fashion.

This delight in anything really artistic—any true transmission of feeling—was quite like Tolstoy. He is always profoundly moved by such things.

So pleased was he with Lopátin's performance, that he revised, and made several alterations in, the play, giving the Third Peasant more to say.

At tea that evening, speaking about dramatic art, Leo Nikoláyevitch thus defined the meaning and importance of artistic creation :



The peculiarity of an artist's power of observation consists in his capacity to see, in what goes on around him, those traits which escape other people's notice. He sees what others see, but does not see it as they do; and then, by reproducing in his work just those traits which others have not noticed, he obliges them to see things as he himself sees and understands them.

Therefore in every work of art we find something new to us, and learn from it. 'Now you, for instance,' said Leo Nikoláyevitch, 'in representing the peasant, reproduce a figure such as each of us has seen in real life, but you have succeeded in noting and conveying something we had not observed; and in your presentation I myself see something that is new to me.'

Tolstoy treated every one he spoke to as his equal. He argued hotly and strenuously, but it was easy to see how pure and sincere was the joy that gleamed in his eyes, when his hearer sympathised with him, or when he saw that his thought was understood. . . . I brought away the conviction that every word of Tolstoy's flows from the depth of his soul, and that his sermon is the result not only of immense mental work, but also of the keenest spiritual sufferings, such as immeasurable breadth of imagination can bring to a man.

It seemed to me that in Tolstoy's soul a tragedy is being enacted: that his merciless self-analysis prevents him from reaching satisfaction; that he does not find within himself all that he considers necessary for human life, and demands from others; that he struggles with himself, and that this duality occasions his suffering.

When at last, on 30th December, the performance was given to an audience as large as the big salon would hold, the play was a triumphant success.

Tolstoy's intention in it is by no means purely comic. It contains two effectively-presented ideas, dear to him. As I have pointed out in a previous chapter, his whole work concerning religion has been an attempt to show that essentially it has nothing to do with the supernatural or miraculous, and is quite independent of anything of that

kind; and the attack on spiritualism presented by the play is fully in accord with his deliberate and carefully formed opinion. The Professor's speech in Act III starts by confusing the distinction between matter and spirit. Nothing but perplexity can result, Tolstoy maintains, from talking about spiritualism so long as we do not know what we mean by *spirit*, and how to distinguish it from *matter*. 'We who live after Kant cannot get away from the distinction he indicated.' Matter is that which we can know through our five senses, and to that domain belong astral bodies and ghosts—if they can be perceived or investigated by our eyes, ears, or sense of touch; but spirit belongs to quite a different world. The moral law within belongs to the spirit-world, and is distinguishable from *matter* by the fact that it *cannot* be investigated by means of our five senses. So all the usual talk about spiritualism starts with a misuse of terms. If the spiritualists know what they mean by matter and spirit, they should explain themselves; but to ask us to investigate *material* phenomena and pretend they are *spiritual*, is unreasonable. Tolstoy's contention is that this fundamental muddle-headedness cannot be cured by any amount of 'investigation,' however extraordinary the occurrences perceived may be. The revelations must stand on their own bottom: a message does not become 'spiritual' by being delivered from a pulpit, or carved in stone, or by coming to us when we are in an abnormal physical condition, or by being uttered by somebody 'under control.'

He does not mince words on the matter, but in one of his books roundly declares:

The spiritualists, to convince you of the reality of their apparitions, usually say, 'You cannot judge: you must try it, be present at several séances' (i.e. come and sit silent in the dark for hours together in the same room with semi-sane people, and repeat this some ten times over) 'and you shall see all that we see.'

Yes, naturally ! Only place yourself in such conditions, and you may see what you will. But this can be attained still more quickly by getting drunk or smoking opium.

Tolstoy would also not admit that man's moral and spiritual welfare can be forwarded by ocular or aural demonstration that after seventy years of this life, men are to have (say) 70,000 years of life elsewhere with a different body. Time and space, like all that pertains to the domain of the five senses, have no part in the spirit-world, the promptings of which are 'very nigh unto' us here and now, but cannot be reached along lines of investigation which depend for their validity on those same senses.

This treatment of spiritualism might well make the play distasteful to those who hope great things from the careful investigation of psychic phenomena ; but here again Tolstoy's artistic instinct saves him. He places the scene amid surroundings in which fraud would naturally play a part, and his characters (except Tanya, who perhaps is rather too much of a French *soubrette* to be quite in the picture) are people who in real life would have been likely to do and say just the things he makes them do and say. Everybody knows that humbug and trickery have been practised in connection with spiritualism. No reasonable spiritualist objects to this being emphasised, and when, in 1909, the students of Birmingham University performed the piece, they did so with the hearty approval of that shining light of the Psychical Research Society, their Principal, Sir Oliver Lodge.

The other conviction the play brings out, is Tolstoy's contempt for the empty, useless and expensive pastimes of the 'cultured' classes, as compared with the serious interests of the agricultural peasantry ; and this again he presents with artistic tact, by contrasting the frivolity of a rather amiable and honourable landowning family, with the need for land of peasants whose rustic limitations and crudities he does not try to tone down.

The comedy made its way past the Censor comparatively quickly and easily.

It was publicly performed for the first time by an amateur troupe in Toúla, in aid of a Home for Destitute Children. Tolstoy himself went to see the performance, but the doorkeeper, who did not know him and supposed him to be a peasant, turned him out. The mistake was, of course, soon explained and remedied. The story goes that during the rehearsal one of the local aristocrats, who played the part of Gregory the footman, was very politely shoving the peasants out of the front door, when Tolstoy stopped him and said :

‘No, that’s not natural ! You must bundle them out just as the doorkeeper bundled me out just now !’ and he recounted what had occurred.

The play was presented at Tsárskoe Seló, where it was acted by a talented troupe of amateurs drawn from the highest circles. Alexander III was delighted with it, and warmly thanked the performers. Neither the Emperor nor the performers, nor the round dozen of Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses who were present, appear to have been aware of the social satire the play contained.

Long before *The Power of Darkness* was allowed, *Fruits of Culture* was staged at the Alexándrinsky Theatre in Petersburg. It was first produced there in September 1891, the very month when (as will be told in a subsequent chapter) the Tolstoy family were setting out for the Famine district. The Little Theatre in Moscow produced it about the same time.

Its production at that crisis, when, beyond the officially-admitted ‘shortness of crops,’ a terrible famine was becoming apparent, added poignancy to its satire, and the laughter of the public at the animated futilities of the Zvezdintsef family had a background of anxiety for the fate of the masses, represented by the three peasants whose presence in her house so annoyed Mme. Zvezdintsef. The

inaneities of Vovó and Professor Krougosvétlof gave the force of a stinging social indictment to the peasants' exclamations of surprise and disapproval.

At the Little Theatre in Moscow it was treated by the actors as pure comedy. This diminished its effect as a social indictment, but did not prevent its being a great success, and establishing itself at once among the classics of the Russian stage. That this purely comic treatment was not to Tolstoy's taste is shown by a remark he made to P. M. Ptchélnikof, Manager of the Office of the Imperial Moscow Theatres, when he saw the play performed in its second season. He said the actors who played the three peasants were overdoing their parts, and added, 'In my opinion they are not acting naturally. If one did not watch the scene, but only heard the dialogue, one would often be puzzled to guess what the public are laughing at, for in the words of the peasants a complaint is constantly heard, and sometimes an attempted protest. In my opinion, their words should evoke sympathy for their hopeless position if you like—but certainly not laughter.'

Listening to the monologue pronounced by the drunken man-cook, he expressed surprise that the Censor had allowed that scene to pass.

In reply to an inquiry from Ptchélnikof, whether they might hope that he would write other pieces for the Little Theatre, he replied :

I would do so with great pleasure, and I even feel a special need to express myself in that way, and at the present time [1892] it would be extremely to the point. But I feel certain the Censor would not pass my plays. You would not believe how, from the very commencement of my activity, that horrible Censor question has tormented me ! I wanted to write what I felt ; but at the same time, it occurred to me that what I wrote would not be permitted ; and involuntarily I had to abandon the work. I abandoned, and went on abandoning, and meanwhile the years passed away. . . .

One could hardly find a better instance of the effect an irresponsible Dramatic Censorship has upon the work of a great writer.

Since then, *Fruits of Culture* has been reproduced again and again, not only in Russia but also abroad. One wonders how long it will be before it reaches the English and American stage!

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## CHAPTER XI

### THE SEX QUESTION

[1890] Semyónof, Tchertkóf and Gay. *The Kreutzer Sonata*. Woman's degradation and domination. Perverted by man, she revenges herself. Preventatives. The *Afterword*. Ideals. How Tolstoy came to his conclusion. Stanton Coit's view. A doctor's view. Bagehot's view. Sensation produced by *The Kreutzer Sonata*. Archbishop Nikanór. Tolstoy agitated by the subject. Effects of Tolstoy's view. Gay paints portrait of Mary Lvóvna, and models bust of Tolstoy. Répin's picture. Gay's 'What is Truth?' Visits Óptin Monastery. Father Ambrose. K. N. Leóntief. The Emperor and *The Kreutzer Sonata*. Literary output. Denounced by the clergy.

SEMYÓNOF, the peasant-writer, met Tchertkóf early in 1890, when the latter was returning with Gay from 1890 Yásnaya where they had been staying. Semyónof says:

I asked about Tolstoy, and was told that he was well, vigorous, and working. Tchertkóf gave no details. He was evidently upset about something, and only from Gay did I learn that things were not going smoothly. 'Is that the kind of life he needs?' said Gay. 'He is thinking for the whole human race, but no consideration is paid to his spiritual needs at all. Continual bustle, trifles, small demands, all those guests . . . ugh!'

Tchertkóf was taking *The Kreutzer Sonata* to Petersburg. It was already circulating in Moscow in lithographed copies, but this was its final revision. *Fruits of Culture* was then just being printed, in a Collection dedicated to the memory of Úryef [President of the Society of Dramatists].

Tchertkóf did not approve of such writings. He did not care for works which lacked a religious tendency. In authorship he demanded religious sermonising, and, lest this should become a trade, he decided that a writer should take no money for his work. 'To do so is a sin!' said he. 'By writing we serve mankind and lead their souls out of darkness; but if we take money, it becomes not a service, but something very different!' It is, in his opinion, immoral: just as it would be for a man, when saving another from drowning, to demand money for so doing.

These remarks addressed by a wealthy man to a peasant who supported his family with difficulty, and whom the few pounds he got for his stories lifted just above actual want, are exceedingly characteristic. I remember that years later, when one of his colleagues had occasion to remonstrate with Tchertkóf on the harshness of his demands, his reply was: 'In our movement we consider principles, but not people'; and it was just that lack of consideration for others, which dried up the fountains which Tolstoy's magic caused to gush forth. Tolstoy inspired enthusiasm, and many offered him their help, work, or money. All these converts he passed on to Tchertkóf, a man of whose sincerity, ardour and full acceptance of his principles he was assured. But Tchertkóf was impractical and often unreasonable, and the fate of those whom Tolstoy placed at his disposal was a hard one. Ultimately, the control of Tolstoy's public affairs (the Doukhobór Migration, the printing of his prohibited books, and the editorship of the Free Age Press, etc.) passed definitely into Tchertkóf's hands, and his many scruples—which often bore far more severely on others than on himself—were the main reasons why so little was accomplished and so much friction engendered.

Those who would understand the psychology of the Tolstoy movement should ponder Fénelon's remark: 'Rien n'est si contraire à la simplicité que le scrupule. Il cache



je ne sais quoi de double et de faux ; on croit n'être en peine que par délicatesse d'amour pour Dieu ; mais dans le fond on est inquiet pour soi, et on est jaloux pour sa propre perfection, par un attachement naturel à soi. . . .<sup>1</sup>

The peculiar position created by Tolstoy's affection for Tchertkóf, and by Tchertkóf's forceful and domineering nature, were painfully felt in the publishing business of the Mediator from the first. Of that, personally, I saw little ; but I heard of it from those who suffered, and years later I witnessed the same thing repeated under other circumstances.

In the passage I have already quoted, Semyónof adds :

Gay's relation to authorship was different. He demanded, first of all, artistic feeling and originality. A man must say his own say ; and a little of oneself is more valuable than a lot of imitation.

The sex question, dealt with in *The Kreutzer Sonata*, is one that Tolstoy has always regarded as most important and most agitating. He once wrote :

There is no kind of offence that men commit against the moral law, which they hide from one another so carefully as those evoked by sexual desire ; and there are none so common to all, seizing them in most varied and dreadful forms. Nor are there any on which people look so differently : some regarding certain acts as terrible sins, while others regard the same acts as most ordinary conveniences or pleasures. There are no offences with regard to which so much Pharisaism has been shown ; none, one's relation to which so indicates a man's moral level ; and none more ruinous to individuals and to the forward movement of mankind.

At first *The Kreutzer Sonata* was forbidden ; but the lithographed copies circulated widely. I still possess one

<sup>1</sup> Nothing is so opposed to simplicity as scrupulosity. Scrupulosity hides a certain duplicity and falseness. One thinks one is troubled only by the delicacy of one's love for God ; but at bottom one is troubled about oneself, and jealous about one's own perfection, through a natural attachment to oneself.

of them, and the sight of it recalls the thrill of excitement which the acquisition of a new, prohibited work by Tolstoy used to evoke. There was in Russia no political liberty, no liberty of conscience, no freedom of the press, and no right of public meeting (even private meetings were liable to be interrupted by the police at any time) but almost the whole of the 'intelligents' were tacitly united in maintaining freedom of thought and conversation—which the Government would also have suppressed had it been possible to do so—and this tacit conspiracy kept the soul of society alive. It is difficult to convey to those who have always been accustomed to buy what books they like, and to read them when and where they please, the interest and excitement then produced in Russia by the appearance of each new prohibited book dealing with a vital subject. Gatherings assembled in private houses to hear the forbidden book read aloud—perhaps from the only available copy—and to discuss it; and books so read and so discussed had an immense influence.

The interest aroused by *The Kreutzer Sonata* was quite as vivid as that aroused by any other of Tolstoy's books, though its views did not meet with any very general approval.

It is a story told in a railway carriage. Pozdnishéf, who has killed his wife, but whom a jury have acquitted, narrates how he came to do it, and maintains that the words of Christ, 'Every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart,' apply to all women—especially to one's own wife; and that absolute purity of thought is the only safe or right thing.

Tolstoy's craftsmanship never fails him. By selecting Pozdnishéf—who has gone through so much, and is nervous and excitable to the verge of abnormality—to express his thought (or, what is more than his thought, his *feeling*) he is able to utter it strenuously, yet with absolute fidelity to life.

There is something almost uncanny in the way the thinker, with a bias for exaggeration, in Tolstoy exploits his *alter ego*, the artist, with so marvellous a sense of proportion and balance.

As is usual in his stories, the things said incidentally while building up the case are themselves highly interesting. For instance, Pozdnishéf has been speaking of 'the domination of women,' and has been met by the remark that it is men who dominate. He proceeds to explain his view :

'On the one hand women are reduced to the lowest stage of degradation, but on the other they have dominion. It is just as with the Jews. As they, with their money-power, have revenged themselves for the oppression put upon them, so women have done. "Ah, you wish us to be confined to trade! Very well; as traders we will hold you in thrall," say the Jews. "Ah, you wish us to be merely objects of sensuality! Very well! As objects of sensuality we will enslave you!" say women. Woman's emancipation does not lie in obtaining the vote or being made a Judge [things harmful, in Tolstoy's view, to either sex] but in obtaining sexual equality with men: having the right to have a man or refrain from having him at her wish, and to choose a man, and not be chosen. You say that is abominable? Very well! Then do not let man have such rights. At present woman is deprived of these rights, which men possess. And to make up for that, she acts on man's sensuality, and through his sensuality subdues him in such a way that he only retains the formal right of choice, while in reality she chooses. And having once mastered that weapon, she abuses it, and obtains a terrible power over men.'

'But where is this special power?' asked I.

'Where is her power! Everywhere, and in everything! Go past the shops in any large town. The amount of labour there stored is beyond compute—uncounted millions; but see whether in nine-tenths of those shops there is anything for men's use? All the luxury of life is wanted and kept up by women.

'Count up all the factories. An immense part of them produce useless ornaments, vehicles, furniture and trifles, for woman. Millions of people, generations of toilers, perish, working like galley-slaves in the factories, only to satisfy her caprice. Women, like queens, hold nine-tenths of the human race in slavery and hard-labour. And all because women have been degraded and deprived of their equal right! So they revenge themselves by acting on our sensuality, and snaring us in their net. Yes, it all comes from that!

'Woman has so acquired the art of evoking sensuality, that a man cannot address her quietly. As soon as a man has approached a woman, he has already fallen under her spell and become dazed. Even in former days, I always felt uncomfortable and frightened when I saw a woman arrayed in a ball-dress; but now it simply terrifies me, and I see something plainly dangerous and wrong, and want to call a policeman and demand protection against the danger, and have it removed!

'Yes, you laugh!' shouted he at me; 'but it is not at all a joke! I am sure a time will come, and perhaps very soon, when people will understand this; and will be surprised that a society could have existed in which actions were tolerated which so infringe public tranquillity, as those adornments of her person, plainly evoking sensuality, which are permitted to woman in our society. It is like setting all sorts of traps in the roads and public paths: it is even worse! Why are games of chance forbidden, while women in attire evoking sensuality are not forbidden? They are a thousand times more dangerous!'

Man, he continues, is to blame for regarding woman as an object to gratify his lust. To serve that purpose she is educated, and taught to despise old maids, and to look down on those who have chosen the path of purity. To that end her accomplishments are directed, and for that she is dressed up and exhibited; 'It is the same in the street where the brothels are, and at the Court balls! . . .'

For the sake of that kind of love, that is, nastiness, they destroy what? Half the human race! Women should be the

helpers of the movement of mankind towards truth and welfare, but for the sake of his pleasure, man makes of them not helpers but foes. Look! What is it that everywhere hinders the advance of humanity? Woman! And why is she what she is? Only on account of that.

Equally horrible to Pozdnishéf (and to Tolstoy) is the use of preventatives:

She [his wife] was unwell, and the doctors forbade her to have children, and taught her how to do it. To me that was detestable. I struggled against it, but she, with frivolous obstinacy, insisted on having her way, and I submitted. The last justification of our swinish life—children—was removed, and life became still nastier.

Tolstoy explains that in the natural course of things the sex-appetite exhausts itself: on the mother's side, owing to the strain of child-bearing and nursing and family cares, and on the man's side, owing to the burden of supporting the family. Where preventatives are used, the normal burdens of matrimony are evaded, the appetites are kept alive, and sooner or later either the husband or wife is attracted by some one else, and the evil results become manifest.

Whatever truth there may be in that contention, Tolstoy does not make us feel that he has fairly weighed the fearful evils that result from bringing unwanted children into the world, or from overtaxing a wife's health. In actual life the choice generally is not between using preventatives or practising continence, but between preventatives and an excessive birth-rate. And even where men set themselves to practise continence, as in a monastery, it often happens that their minds are more obsessed by sex-desire than they would be were they married.

In the course of the story (especially in the lithographed edition, afterwards modified, from which I make some of my quotations) there are some striking passages relating

to jealousy. Listening to the opening Presto Movement of the Kreutzer Sonata, Pozdnishéf finds his mind transported to quite a different sphere. It seemed to him, after hearing the music, that he perceived quite a new way of living, and a new relation to things :

‘Yes, that way ! Not at all as I formerly thought and lived, but that way !’ it seemed to say to my soul. I could not explain to myself what the new thing was, that I had learnt ; but the consciousness of it was very pleasant. In that new state, jealousy no longer had any place. The same people were there, including my wife, and *he* [the musician of whom Pozdnishéf was jealous] but they appeared in quite a different light. That music had carried me into a world where jealousy no longer had place. Jealousy, and the feeling which evoked it, seemed trifles about which it was not worth while to think.

Elsewhere Pozdnishéf says :

The horrible thing was that I considered myself to have an undoubted, full right over her body, as though it were my own ; and yet I felt that I could not control that body, and she was not mine, and that she could dispose of it as she wished, and wished to dispose of it not as I wanted.

And at the end of the story, when his wife is dying of the wound he had inflicted :

I glanced at the children, and at her bruised and injured face, and for the first time forgot myself, my rights, my pride, and for the first time saw in her a human being. And so contemptible did everything appear to me : all my jealousy, and all that had offended me, and so important what I had done, that I wished to fall with my face to her hand, and say, ‘Forgive me !’ but I dared not do it.

Extremes meet, and this seemed to many people exceedingly like ‘free love,’ and Tolstoy received a large number of letters of inquiry. Shocked at an interpretation so opposed to his intention, he hastened to write an

*Afterword* (included in *Essays and Letters*) to explain his meaning. Since those *Essays* should be in the hands of all who care to understand Tolstoy, I will restrict myself to the quotation of a few short passages showing that what he commended was not free love, but complete and absolute chastity.

Children, he says, are badly brought up: not as human beings, but

Like the young of animals, and the chief care of the parents (encouraged by false medical science) is, not to prepare them for activities worthy of human beings, but to overfeed them, increase their size, and make them clean, white, well-conditioned and handsome. . . .

And in these pampered children (as in all overfed animals) an overpowering sexual sensitiveness shows itself unnaturally early, causing them terrible distress as they approach the age of puberty. All the surroundings of their life: clothes, books, sight-seeing, music, dances, dainty fare—everything, from the pictures on their bonbon-boxes to the stories, novels, and poems they read—increases this sensitiveness more and more, and, as a result, the most terrible sexual vices and diseases are frequent incidents in the life of children of both sexes, and often retain their hold after maturity is reached. . . .

In our society young people devote the best part of their lives—the men to spying out, pursuing, and obtaining (whether in marriage or free union) those best suited to attract them; and the women and girls, to enticing and entrapping men into free unions or marriages.

In this way the best powers of many people run to waste in an activity not merely unproductive but injurious. We should understand that no aim that we count worthy of a man—whether it be the service of humanity, fatherland, science, or art (not to speak of the service of God)—can be attained by means of connection with the object of one's love (either with or without a marriage rite). On the contrary, falling in love and connection (however men may seek to prove the contrary in prose and verse) never facilitate, but always impede, the attainment of any worthy aim. . . .

The Christian ideal is that of love of God and one's fellow-man . . . whereas sexual love, marriage, is a service of self, and consequently in any case an obstacle to the service of God and man, and therefore, from a Christian point of view, a fall, a sin.

To get married would not help the service of God and man, though it were done to perpetuate the human race. For that purpose, instead of getting married and producing fresh children, it would be much simpler to save and rear those millions of children who are now perishing around us for lack of food for their bodies, not to mention food for their souls. . . .

Only if he were sure that all existing children were provided for, could a Christian enter upon marriage without being conscious of a moral fall.

In the Gospels it is said clearly, and so that there is no possibility of misinterpretation: First, that a married man should not divorce his wife to take another, but should live with her whom he has once taken. Secondly, that it is wrong (and it is said of men generally, married or unmarried) to look on a woman as an object of desire. And, thirdly, that for the unmarried it is better not to marry—that is to say, it is better to be quite chaste. . . .

In the *Afterword* Tolstoy expressly adopts the course Ballou challenged: that of setting up admittedly unattainable ideals for men to strive towards.

The weakness of the position lies in the fact that he selects 'ideals,' such as absolute poverty and complete chastity, and when people question their validity, and say that such teaching runs counter not merely to the faults of humanity, but to humanity itself—to those fundamental things which make man, man—Tolstoy, in effect, replies: 'It is true that people do not and will not act so, but they ought to strive towards it, and not consent to lower the ideal!'

But this reply evidently begs the question whether the things he has selected are true ideals: whether it may not



be right that a man should have some property—say, the pen he is accustomed to write with, or the story he wishes to finish writing? and whether it may not be better that a man's qualities and energies should be drawn out by his natural affection for a woman, rather than that he should spend his force in a struggle for self-mastery?

Why must we *assume* the infallibility of Tolstoy's ideals? We know that only a few years before this, in *What do I Believe?*, he had written:

Christ showed me that another snare, destroying my welfare, is lustfulness; that is to say, desire towards another woman than her to whom I have united myself. I cannot but believe this, and therefore cannot consider lustfulness to be a natural and elevated human characteristic, as I used to do; I cannot justify it to myself by my love of beauty, by my being in love, or by my wife's defects; and at the first sign of yielding to lustful desire, I cannot but admit that I am in an unhealthy and unnatural condition, and must seek every means of freeing myself from this evil.

But recognising that lustfulness is bad for me, I also recognise the temptation which formerly led me into it, and can therefore no longer promote it.

I now know that the chief temptation arises, not from the fact that people cannot restrain their desires, but from the fact that most men and women have been abandoned by those to whom they were first united. I now know that every abandonment of the man or woman with whom one has been first united, is the divorce which Christ forbids; for the men and women deserted by their first spouses diffuse debauchery in the world. Remembering what it was that led me into adultery, I now see that—besides the barbarous education that physically and mentally inflamed lustful desire in me, which was encouraged in all sorts of ingenious ways—the chief temptation that trapped me lay in my desertion of the woman with whom I was first united, and in the condition of those women who had been deserted, and who surrounded me on all sides. I now see that the chief strength of the

temptation lay, not in my lustfulness, but in the fact that my lustfulness, and that of the deserted women around me, was unsatisfied. I now understand the words of Christ, who said that from the beginning God created them—male and female—and that the twain should become one flesh, and that, therefore, man should not and must not put asunder what God has joined.

I now understand that monogamy is the natural law of humanity, which must not be infringed. I now fully understand the saying that he who divorces his wife (that is, leaves the woman with whom he has first united) for another, causes her to become an adulteress, and to his own hurt brings a new evil into the world. I believe this, and that belief quite alters my former estimate of what is elevated and what is evil and base in life. What before seemed to me the very best: a refined, elegant life, and passionate and poetic love, such as all the poets and artists extol, now appears to me repulsive and bad. On the contrary, a laborious, scanty, rough life, moderating one's lusts, now appears to me good. Lofty and important seem, not so much the human institution of marriage, setting a permanent seal of legality on a certain union of man and woman, as the union itself of any man and woman, which, once accomplished, cannot be infringed without infringing the will of God. If now, in moments of forgetfulness, I fall into lustful desires—knowing the snare which led me into that evil—I can no longer foster it as I formerly did. I cannot desire and seek physical idleness, or an easy life, which excites immoderate desire. I cannot seek those amusements: novels, poems, music, theatres and balls, which excite amatory desire, and which formerly seemed to me not merely unobjectionable, but very elevated pleasures. I cannot abandon my wife, knowing that such abandonment is a snare both for me and for her and for others. I cannot help others to an idle, self-indulgent life, nor participate in, nor organise, those lust-promoting amusements which ensnare me and others. I cannot approve of a celibate life for those who are ripe for marriage. I cannot help to separate husband and wife. I cannot make a distinction between unions called marriages, and unions not so named, nor can I fail to consider a union

a man has once entered into, as being holy and obligatory.

So that the union which was 'holy and obligatory' in 1883 had now, in 1890, become 'a fall, a sin.' Even as late as 1886 (only four years before *The Kreutzer Sonata*) Tolstoy had ended *What Then Must We Do?* with an ardent appeal to women to do their duty as prolific mothers; and now, to the great perplexity of many who had been priding themselves on the increasing size of their families, his ideal was different. It is quite right that a man's mind should grow and change; and one should not reproach, but should be grateful to, a writer bold enough to admit that he no longer holds his former views; but nevertheless we ask ourselves whether it is certain that one whose view yesterday, and the day before yesterday, was erroneous or incomplete, is altogether infallible to-day.

What Tolstoy says about it is:

I never anticipated that the development of my thoughts would bring me to such conclusions. I was startled at them and did not wish to believe them, but it was impossible not to do so.

I am writing a *Life of Tolstoy*, and telling of his opinions, and I need not elaborate or press my own; but let me say that the sex question seems to me to be the most perplexing problem we have to deal with; and I profoundly distrust all short and simple solutions embodied in clear-cut rules, and supplying a definite external criterion of what is right and wrong for everybody. Yet while distrusting these things, I see that mankind so urgently needs guidance that it finds itself forced to frame simple solutions, and to set up external criterions of conduct.

Of the three solutions most usually offered, that of perfect chastity (using the word in the sense in which all marriage is unchaste) is put by Tolstoy as powerfully and

plausibly as, I suppose, it can be put, and I need not go over that ground again.

Monogamy sanctified by the Church is the solution most generally and ostensibly held among us; but the trouble is that belief in the Church is rapidly crumbling away, and only a small minority of people retain any vital faith in it. With some, it is now merely a convention; with others, a superstition; and to very many it means nothing at all. Therefore people are beginning to look through the sanction to the thing itself; and as soon as they do that, they see that many officially sanctioned marriages are grossly self-indulgent and immoral, and that the Church is holding together couples who ought to be separate, and holding apart couples who ought to be publicly united.

In one of his pamphlets, Dr. Stanton Coit has dwelt on the importance of publicity and State regulation in regard to marriage. The birth of children is, he says, a matter of such supreme importance that Socialistic legislation in sex matters is inevitable; and in fact our present marriage laws are a rude attempt in that direction. That, I think, is true. The obligation of the citizen and of the parent to the State of which he forms a part, is one of the most essential facts of the situation—but it is one which could not appeal to Tolstoy, who altogether repudiates the authority of the State. In any case, to admit that we need publicity and State regulation, leaves us still to find the principles on which our regulations (whether voluntary or legal) should be framed.

The third solution offered is that of liberty and free love; but this is much too indefinite to be a practical solution. People need guidance. Freedom is worse than useless unless one knows how to use it; and life in a community would be intolerable if each one did whatever he or she liked, utterly regardless of the rest.

It seems to me that the guiding principle should be,

that all that makes for the increase of healthy, happy, useful life, is good; and that all that checks life, making it unhealthy, unhappy or useless, is bad.

That principle covers the case of a Jesus or a Buddha, who abstains from marriage, or leaves wife and child, to carry salvation to the race; for the abstinence of those whose energies are wholly devoted to a noble cause, makes others healthier, happier, and more useful. It covers, too, the case of a married couple, so long as their relations with one another promote the health, happiness and usefulness of themselves, their offspring, and those about them. Nor does it shut out in the cold the many who neither have a great mission entirely absorbing their whole life, nor are fortunate enough to enjoy life-long union with a mate who is spiritually and physically congenial.

We are no longer exclusively concerned about the children, important as they are. We are also somewhat concerned about ourselves; and the importance of the companionship side of sexual relations can therefore not be left out of sight. It is probable that many, who as old maids would have become soured, or as old bachelors would have settled down into isolated selfishness, have been drawn out of themselves by sex-attraction, and have thereby had their interests and sympathies widened, even without having children. Physical pleasure may have been the lure that drew them on, but in so far as their relation with some one of the other sex softened their affections and enabled them to take life more cheerfully, and do better work, it may have been good; while in so far as it tempted them to settle down to selfish enjoyment, it was bad.

When morality becomes humane, it will perhaps no longer decree that those who cannot have all, must have nothing; and for a woman who cannot find a husband with whom she cares to live, to have a child of her own, may then no longer involve social ostracism.

The principle I have suggested does not taboo the sex

instinct, but subordinates it to the welfare of the race and the individual. Sex should be the servant, not the master of life. When it impedes the work that needs doing, it becomes an evil ; but in so far as it cheers and nerves men and women to play the game of life bravely and heartily, it is surely a good.

To be of real use, the principles we apply in this matter must have in view not merely what men and women ought to be, but what they are, and what they may become ; and the problem relates to the health, happiness and usefulness of this generation, as well as to the welfare of the next. We know that if men and women make pleasure the main aim of their life, the results are bad ; but is the result generally any less deplorable when pleasure is quite left out ?

Many people, men as well as women, are astonishingly ignorant when they marry, and some couples soon discover that they do not suit one another ; yet, unless they are prepared to face the public scandal of a divorce, the law in many countries converts their blunder into a life sentence ; and in practice this works out, in England, towards clandestinity, and in Russia, towards open disregard of the official tie. The condemnation of such legislation lies in the fact that it impairs the health, happiness and usefulness of those whom it affects. Disease and sorrow may, as Tolstoy says, be invaluable for man's spiritual development ; but it is not our business in life to promote them, or to help to inflict them on other people.

While, however, I do not agree with Tolstoy on this subject, I realise how inevitable it was that he should arrive at the views he holds. From the time when he himself lived loosely and looked forward to marriage as the solution of his difficulties, to the present day, his progress has been steadily in one and the same direction : namely, towards greater and greater self-control. As a bachelor, he struggled hard against his passions. As a married man,

he was always faithful to his wife. And when, at last, he found his propaganda checked by his matrimonial relations, he wished and tried to sacrifice the latter rather than the former.

Indeed, when we come to consider it, what position could he possibly have taken up, other than the one he adopted? His own experience, and his knowledge of the lives of the Herzens, Ogaryófs, Nekrásófs, Panáefs, and others, prevented his regarding the go-as-you-please doctrine of the free-lovers as a satisfactory solution; but being a Christian-anarchist, and rejecting Church and State, he could also not consider that a ceremony performed by a priest, or an entry in the books of a registrar, turned wrong into right.

What then was left him, except to adopt the principle of perfect purity in thought and deed?—a principle typified and exemplified in the person of Christ, and maintained by the whole Catholic Church, Eastern and Western alike, which has always considered virginity superior to motherhood.

Many people are shocked that, by including in one wholesale condemnation the whole range of physical love—whether merely animal or arising in connection with complete harmony of mind and soul—Tolstoy should wipe out a distinction which to them makes all the difference. By painting in black and white, he misses, they say, a truth which has to be sought in the middle shades; for life is a matter of degree and evolution, and rigid rules and strict statements nearly always fail, at some part of their range, to fit the facts. How, they continue, could a man of such experience and such insight, make such a blunder? And they put it down to his being a dreamer, carried away by fancies. But curiously enough, precisely the same kind of black and white view, treating the sex question as one of physical desire *versus* purity of thought, was put to a young man (and probably to hundreds of

young men who consulted him on the question) by an eminent physician who was at the head of the English medical profession at the time Tolstoy wrote *The Kreutzer Sonata*, and who, instead of being a dreamer carried away by fancies, was a matter-of-fact materialist.

The doctor told the young man that he had reached the age of puberty and required regular weekly intercourse with a woman. He added that one could make acquaintances in the streets for that purpose, but that when doing so it would be advisable to use a certain preventative to avoid the risk of contracting a contagious disease.

In reply to the exclamation : 'But is not that immoral?' the doctor replied :

'Oh, I thought you consulted me as a doctor, about your health! If you want advice about morality, go to a clergyman.'

He did not explain how the young man was to cut himself in halves and walk in two different directions, if the clergyman advised differently! But he admitted that some doctors would not agree with him on the subject, and added :

'I have given you what I consider the best advice for your health; but there is a second-best course, if you like to adopt it. It is, to be perfectly chaste, and keep all your desires under strict control. In that case you will have to be very careful where you go, what you read, what pictures and photographs you look at, and whom you consort with. I am not a religious man, and do not know where he got it from, but Jesus of Nazareth was perfectly right when he said that, "Every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." The physical facts are in exact accord with that saying.'

This is just the Tolstoyan view, only turned inside out. It is the reverse of what Pozdnishéf meant in his reply to the lady who exclaimed indignantly :



'But you are speaking of physical love! Don't you admit the existence of love founded on identity of ideals and on spiritual affinity?'

'Spiritual affinity! Identity of ideals!' repeated he. 'But in that case (excuse my rudeness) why do they go to bed together?'

The advice given by Tolstoy is diametrically opposed to that given by the doctor; but the two men are at one in their rigid exclusion of the affections as being of any account in the matter. That is where Tolstoy fails as a moralist. In morals, more than in anything else, '*C'est le ton qui fait la musique.*' To treat the natural affections, rooted though they be in our physical nature, as in themselves disgusting and horrid, is very harsh; and harshness is always wrong and always ineffectual.

When we observe real life we find that perfectly chaste people sometimes make themselves very unpleasant, while a tactful king or a good-natured actress of genius may be notoriously unchaste, and yet deserve a good deal of admiration and affection. And I am not sure that the popular judgment in such cases is always and altogether wrong, for people's services and virtues deserve to be regarded, as well as their offences and faults: and no virtue or vice can be rightly judged except as part of a whole life. But the point I specially want to make is that Tolstoy's advice was the only advice he could possibly give. People demand clear guidance on what is really a very complex and intricate problem. It is Tolstoy's nature to go straight for a definite solution. It is his way to simplify, and even—as I have said before—to over-simplify. And on this sex question, if you are going to give quite clear-cut advice, you can only say 'do' or 'don't.' The doctor said the one, and Tolstoy says the other; and I respect Tolstoy more than I do the doctor.

No doubt Tolstoy's own position brought him to the conclusions he arrived at. That is generally the case with

us all. His outlook on life had begun to change very seriously after fifteen years of marriage, and had gone on changing for twelve years more. This, as we have seen, produced friction with his wife; and as the pleasures of matrimony meant very much to him, and so did his new beliefs, he must often have found himself torn between desire to go his own way in his wife's despite, and his desire to be her husband. It must have been very difficult to cling firmly to his principles, while held in the bonds of matrimony; and a striving towards complete chastity was the only solution for a man of his character placed in such circumstances.

The remark frequently made that Tolstoy is inconsistent and insincere because he continued to enact the part of a husband after writing *The Kreutzer Sonata*, is altogether unjust. For assuming his extremest view to be correct, his position would be parallel to that of a drunkard who had won his way to a state of semi-self-control alternating with periods of inebriety. Would not such a man be justified in testifying to his belief that the use of intoxicants is harmful? And might he not, without being considered a hypocrite, declare that the police ought not to allow whisky to be seen in public places?

Tolstoy is so interesting and valuable, just because he tells us honestly what he thinks and feels, regardless of how it reflects on his own conduct. That is a rare and valuable practice, and should be recognised and respected. It would be much fairer to say that those who trim their opinions to match their conduct are insincere: for few men can be so obtuse as never to let their minds travel nearer to perfection than their bodies have already attained.

The originality of Tolstoy's view lies in the corollary he draws from the admitted fact that there is something very charming and beautiful in innocence and purity, and that some of the noblest work in the world has been done by people so devoted to their mission, that they had

no time or thought for love-making or marriage. The corollary he draws—namely, that all marital relations, and all love tinged by sex, are beastly—seems to me, as I have said, harsh and unsound.

It has its value, however, in that it enables him to throw into strong relief the evils produced by lustfulness; and they truly are tremendous.

Bagehot long ago pointed out that we are descended from ancestors whose tribes were in constant danger of being wiped out by foes, wild beasts, and all sorts of dangers. For them, morality consisted in keeping the race alive by producing as many vigorous children as possible. The polygamy of the Jews evidently aimed at that; as did the Mosaic law, with its injunctions to raise up seed to a deceased brother, etc. A man with many sons was respected and admired: 'Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them; they shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate.' Indeed, with twenty or more strapping lads behind him—or (like a late Shah of Persia) with a whole regiment of his own sons, he could 'speak like a father' to any one he met.

Most of us have inherited sexual desires quite out of proportion to the number of children we require. As Bagehot puts it, we have a 'felt want' in excess of our 'real want.' What we most need to-day, is not quantity but quality of progeny, and that their lives should be better worth living. Therefore the morality of to-day lies in lessening and controlling the force of sexual desire, and in so understanding and guiding that instinct that the incentive and joy it offers may be directed, not to selfish indulgence, but to getting the work of the world well done; and this implies that mere repression (which often produces abnormality) should not in itself be esteemed a virtue.

The human race will, no doubt, as Tolstoy reminds us, come to an end some day, one way or other; but it needs much more than that, to show it is man's duty to abstain

from parentage, and thereby end it; or even that it is our duty to taboo those natural instincts which draw people together who would otherwise be isolated and miserable.

A point on which Tolstoy and the Church-morality agree, but on which the morality of the future may differ from them, is the question of the finality of a first marriage or (in Tolstoy's view) of a first connection.

No doubt it is better for a man or woman, if they marry at all, to find unerringly and from the first, a partner who will be a real husband or wife, mentally, physically, and spiritually. But—especially in such a society as ours, in which large sections grow up extraordinarily conventional and extraordinarily ignorant, and many possess no 'religious outlook' enabling them to place sex matters in due proportion to the rest of life—very grave mistakes, coupling people who are quite unsuited, are sure to occur.

In such cases Tolstoy and the Church say, 'Endure it: it is good for your soul!' I, on the contrary, suspect that it is bad for the souls of the sufferers, and perhaps also for the souls of those who cause such suffering to be perpetuated. It is not our business to make life hard for one another, but rather to minimise friction which prevents people doing the best work of which they are capable. More facility for divorce would lessen the temptation to ignore or evade the law, and would mitigate the hardship of the situation. In fact, the prostitution which is so common in English cities is partly maintained by the rigidity of the divorce law.

The publication of *The Kreutzer Sonata* produced a tremendous storm. The Church naturally resented Tolstoy's scornful dismissal of the idea of marriage as a sacrament; while the 'advanced' people, who for a whole generation had been asserting the liberty of individual choice without lifelong engagements, were equally furious. From both camps the thunders pealed forth; and Archbishop Nikanór of Kherson denounced Tolstoy as a 'wolf in sheep's

clothing,' and advised his destruction, as his teaching was undermining the whole edifice of society. As examples of pure and continent marriage, the Archbishop instanced some of the Grand Dukes, whose lives unfortunately were by no means adapted to endure the scrutiny so rashly invited.

The general verdict of Russian society was, 'Tolstoy is getting old. He has lost his vigour, and the grapes are sour!' But this suggestion, that his doctrine was the outcome of physical debility, was entirely wide of the mark. In 1896, when he was nearly seventy, I was speaking to him on these matters. After saying that one should never be discouraged or cease to strive to attain to what is good, he added, 'I was myself a husband last night, but that is no reason for abandoning the struggle; God may grant me not to be so again!' He was physically strong and active for years after that, and some of his greatest intellectual achievements still lay before him.

All the same, Tolstoy felt the sting of such comments; as one sees by what he wrote of his life as a young man:

It is grievous to me, in my egotism, to have lived my life bestially, and to know that now it cannot be retrieved. Grievous, chiefly, because people will say: 'It is all very well for you, a dying old man, to say this; but you did not live so! We too, when we are old, will say the same.' That is where the chief punishment of sin lies: in feeling that one is an unworthy vessel for the transmission of the will of God—befouled and spoilt.

And in a similar strain of self-reproach he wrote in his Diary in 1903:—

I am now experiencing the torments of hell: I remember all the abominations of my former life. Those recollections do not leave me, and they poison my life.

In conversation that same year, he remarked:

I cannot even now recall my bachelor life without abhorrence. It was awful! And it all comes from our living and eating

abnormally. That is what causes sexual excesses. I was once driving with a young unmarried peasant—his beard was just showing itself—and I asked him whether he got on without that?—‘Why, I don’t even have time to think of it!’ replied the lad. The worst thing is that from boyhood we are made to believe that it is difficult and unhealthy to live without it. That is untrue. One can do without it. One only needs to look at every woman as we look at our mother or our sister; and then we shall be troubled by no animal impulses. . . .

Many incidents might be quoted showing how greatly Tolstoy’s mind was exercised by this question of the relations of the sexes. On one occasion, having heard that a young man was engaged to be married, Tolstoy called to him in an agitated voice from the other side of the partition. In reply, the young man wished to come to Tolstoy, but the latter stopped him, saying: ‘Remain there, and tell me, if you can—Have you ever known a woman?’

‘Not yet,’ replied the young man simply, and heard sobs from behind the partition.

Tolstoy, especially while he was working at *The Kreutzer Sonata*, was always ready to question every one about his or her personal experiences in these matters. His old friend, I. I. Raévsky, of whom I shall have more to tell later, did not escape interrogation, and returning home one day, said of Tolstoy:

‘What questions that scoundrel puts! He asks about one’s relations with one’s own wife!’

Tolstoy is always so evidently and infectiously sincere, and so intensely earnest in transmitting to us feelings he has genuinely experienced, that people sometimes assume too readily that he is always impartially submitting his balanced judgment. This is not necessarily so. It sometimes happened that his feelings and thoughts were aroused by what he saw to be an unpopular and neglected view, offering him a chance to say something strikingly opposed to accepted opinions. It appealed to him all the more on

that account, and he concentrated his efforts on stating it effectively, even to the neglect of considerations which, at another time and in another mood, he would have admitted deserved consideration. I think that, to some extent, the remarks he puts into Pozdnishéf's mouth may be used to illustrate that remark.

In relation to the sex problem, it deserves to be mentioned that he is lenient with those who have misconducted themselves, and has little sympathy with Puritanic intolerance. In personal intercourse he is not one of those people who make up for being strict with themselves by being severe on others. I remember, soon after Górký's visit to New York, hearing Tolstoy express indignation as well as amazement at the way the American people had treated Górký and Madame Andréyef; and when he was over seventy, I remember taking a walk with him and with a friend of his—a well-known literary man who was still older. The latter was saying that Tolstoy's assertions did not accord with the speaker's own experience of life. He had a mistress and did not consider that it spoilt his life.

'So much the better!' rejoined Tolstoy quietly: 'but what I say is, that a man in such cases has either to seduce a maid, or to deceive a husband, or to go with a woman who sells herself.' Many years later, in *The Christian Teaching* (1897) he again dealt with the sex question and put the matter much more moderately, though still insisting that sexual relations are undesirable. He then said:

To overcome the habit of this sin a man must first of all refrain from increasing it. If he be chaste, let him not infringe his chastity; if he be married, let him be true to his partner; if he have sexual intercourse with many, let him not invent unnatural forms of vice. Let him refrain from augmenting his sexual sin. If men would do this, many of their sufferings would come to an end.

When a man has succeeded in refraining from fresh sin, then let him labour to diminish that sexual sin to which he is still subject; let the externally chaste strive against unchaste thoughts; let the married strive to diminish and regulate sexual intercourse; let the person who knows many of the opposite sex become true to his or her chosen partner.

And if a man has been able to free himself from those habits of sexual lust in which he has hitherto lived, then let him aspire to free himself from the innate tendency to sexual lust common to all.

Although only in rare cases are men able to be altogether chaste, still every one should understand and remember that he can always be more chaste than he formerly was, or can return to the chastity he has lost; and that the nearer he approaches to perfect chastity according to his powers, the more true welfare will he attain, the more earthly welfare will be added to him, and the more will he contribute to the welfare of mankind.

When the matter is put like that: telling us that the world suffers from excessive lust, and the more this is controlled the better for the individual and the race—it becomes much easier to agree. It is as though a society which habitually overate, were adjured to eat less. The advice is good; doubt only arises when one is told not to eat at all!

In some of the Russian Tolstoy Colonies, in which young men and young women who had no reason not to marry, were kept apart by the wave of ascetic feeling *The Kreutzer Sonata* started, its effects were obviously bad, for there were cases in which girls became morbidly obsessed by the sex-idea. Undoubtedly, too, the discussion of the book in society frequently led to results quite contrary to those aimed at by Tolstoy. There were cases also in which wives with no natural inclination for matrimony were filled by this book with a real loathing for the sex relation; and since, among decent people, such a sentiment renders the thing impossible, their husbands found



themselves exposed to the difficulties and dangers of married celibacy.

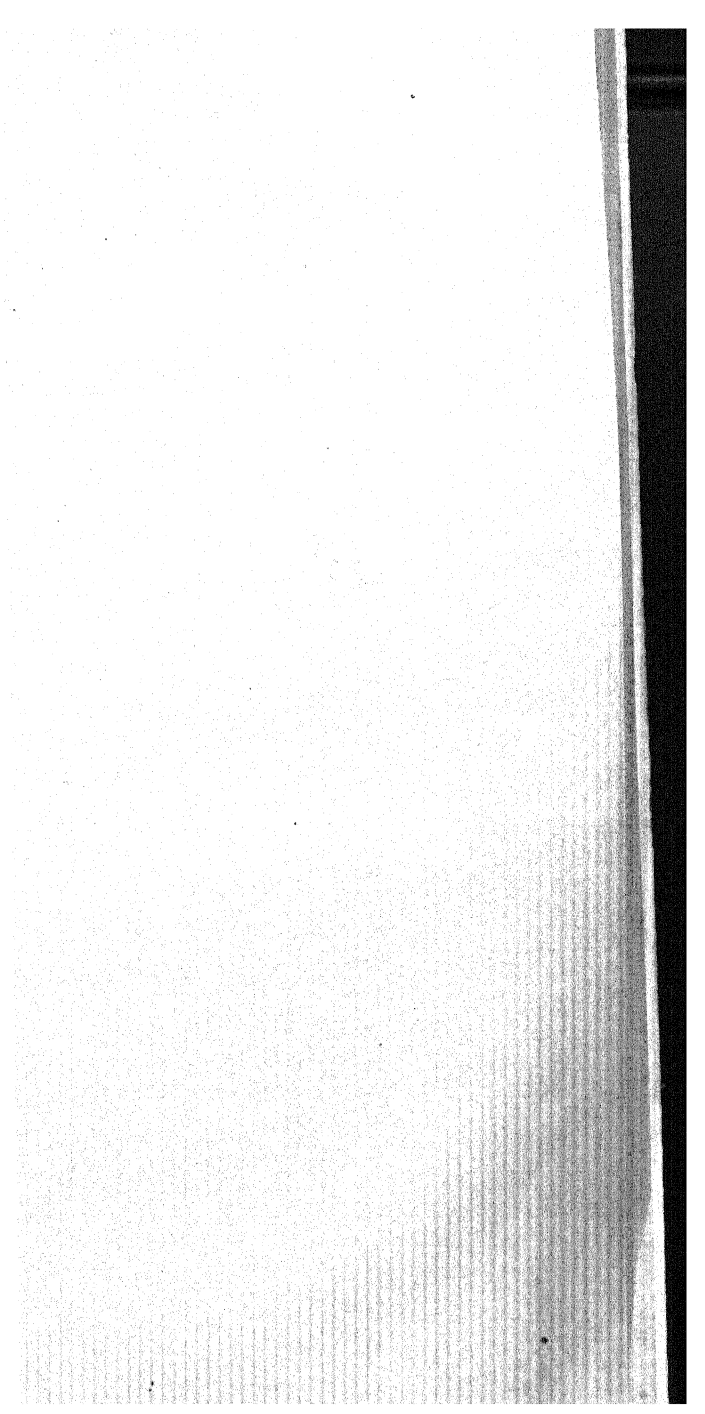
In the Tolstoyan, as in many religious movements, there sprang up a form of mental coercion. When, under the stress of Tolstoy's doctrine, some tender-conscienced person adopted, for a while, Tolstoy's point of view regarding sex or property or Government employ, it was made very hard for him ever to readjust himself. As soon as he tried to do so, he was accused of 'going back on his principles': his 'principles,' for the purpose of the persecution, being those views which had temporarily hypnotised him. Any growth his mind might make after that, was treated as a moral backsliding. In fact, certain Tolstoyans (not differing in this from many other sectarians) claimed the right not merely to chain men's minds, but even to select the particular milestone to which they should be chained.

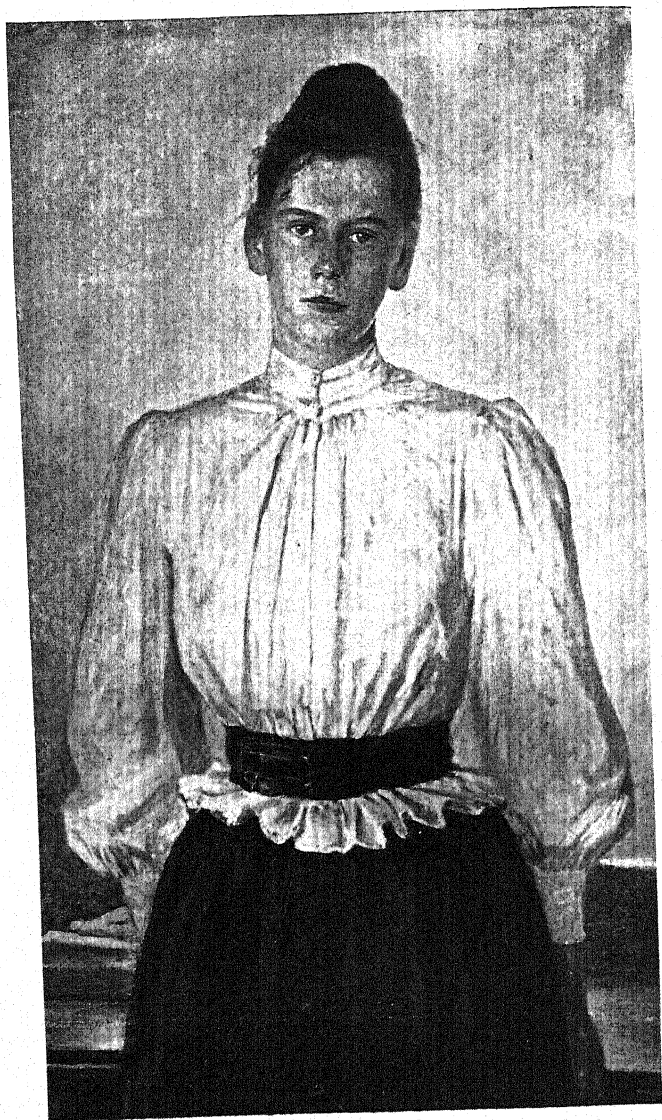
Unquestionably, therefore, *The Kreutzer Sonata* did harm; but on the whole it has probably done much more good.

To the smug people who say, Do not think about this question—all is settled! and to the frivolous people who say, Do not think, but enjoy yourselves! Tolstoy says: If you are rational beings, you dare not abstain from thinking about it!

It is difficult to keep one's balance when forces are in motion of such incredible strength as those aroused by sex; but the danger of neglecting them is greater than the danger of understanding them. At any rate, *The Kreutzer Sonata* presents an aspect of the matter that cannot be left out of account, and sets before us the honest and strongly felt opinions of a man of genius.

In the United States the book was, at first, regarded as indecent literature, and the Post Office refused to handle it. Nor is it difficult to understand why there was such a hubbub. Society is roughly divisible into two halves:





COUNTESS MARY L. TOLSTOY.

*After a portrait by Gay, 1892.*

the one half want the question of the relation of the sexes left alone because they believe that ignorance is the nearest obtainable approach to innocence, and that people would behave worse than they do, if they only knew how to. Disregarding Paul's example of plain-spokenness, this section takes literally his words: 'Let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints.' The other half hold Tolstoy's view, reversed. They see white, what he sees black, and what to him seems bad, to them seems good. They naturally did not like to be denounced, and instinctively threw at him what stones they could.

During the summer of 1890 Gay painted the young Countess Másha, who was his particular favourite among the children. Writing to Birukóf, he said:

I painted that portrait with much love, and am glad you appreciate it. It is not difficult to paint such a wise, kindly and animated little head, but without love of those qualities no one could paint it.

In autumn, being again at Yásnaya when Tolstoy was unwell, Gay modelled a bust of him, which Tolstoy considered the best that any one had yet done.

It was in 1890 also that Répin produced his picture, 'Tolstoy in his Room,' a reproduction of which is here given.

An incident recounted by Feinermann that occurred at this time throws light on Tolstoy's then state of mind.

Répin wished the young Jew to pose for the head of Christ in a picture he was planning, but Feinermann entirely disapproved:

'Forgive me! . . .' I said, 'I cannot. . . .'

'Just one sitting!' pleaded Répin.

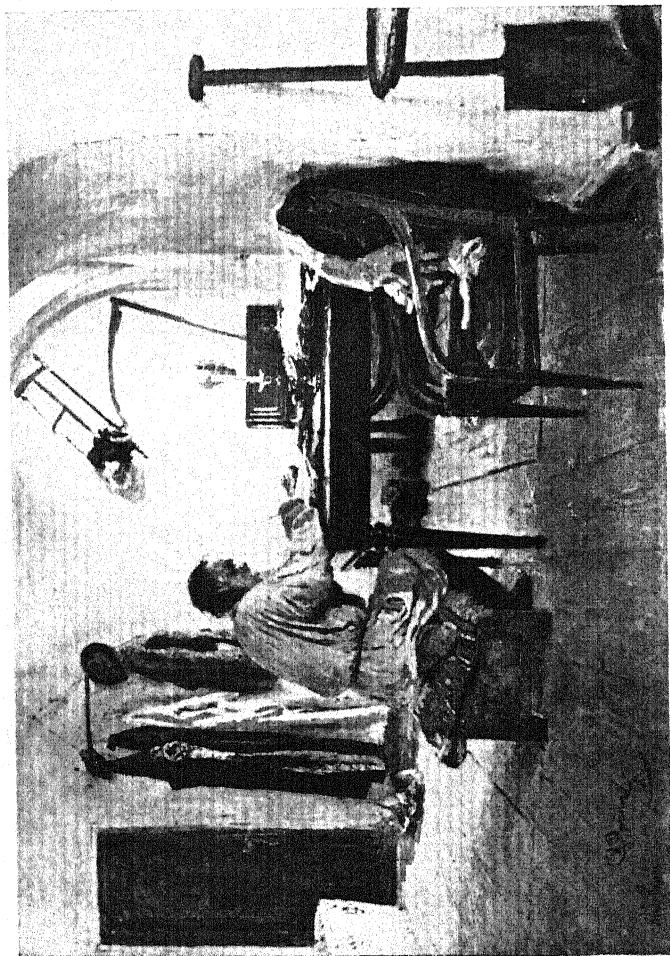
I positively refused.

Répin went away confused, and it seemed to me that Leo Nikoláyevitch, who turned away just then, was also hurt.

I wished to excuse myself to him, and to describe the feelings that agitated me. But he turned to me, and I saw his radiant, joyful look. He pressed my hand firmly, and said, in a pathetic voice full of sincerity and warmth:

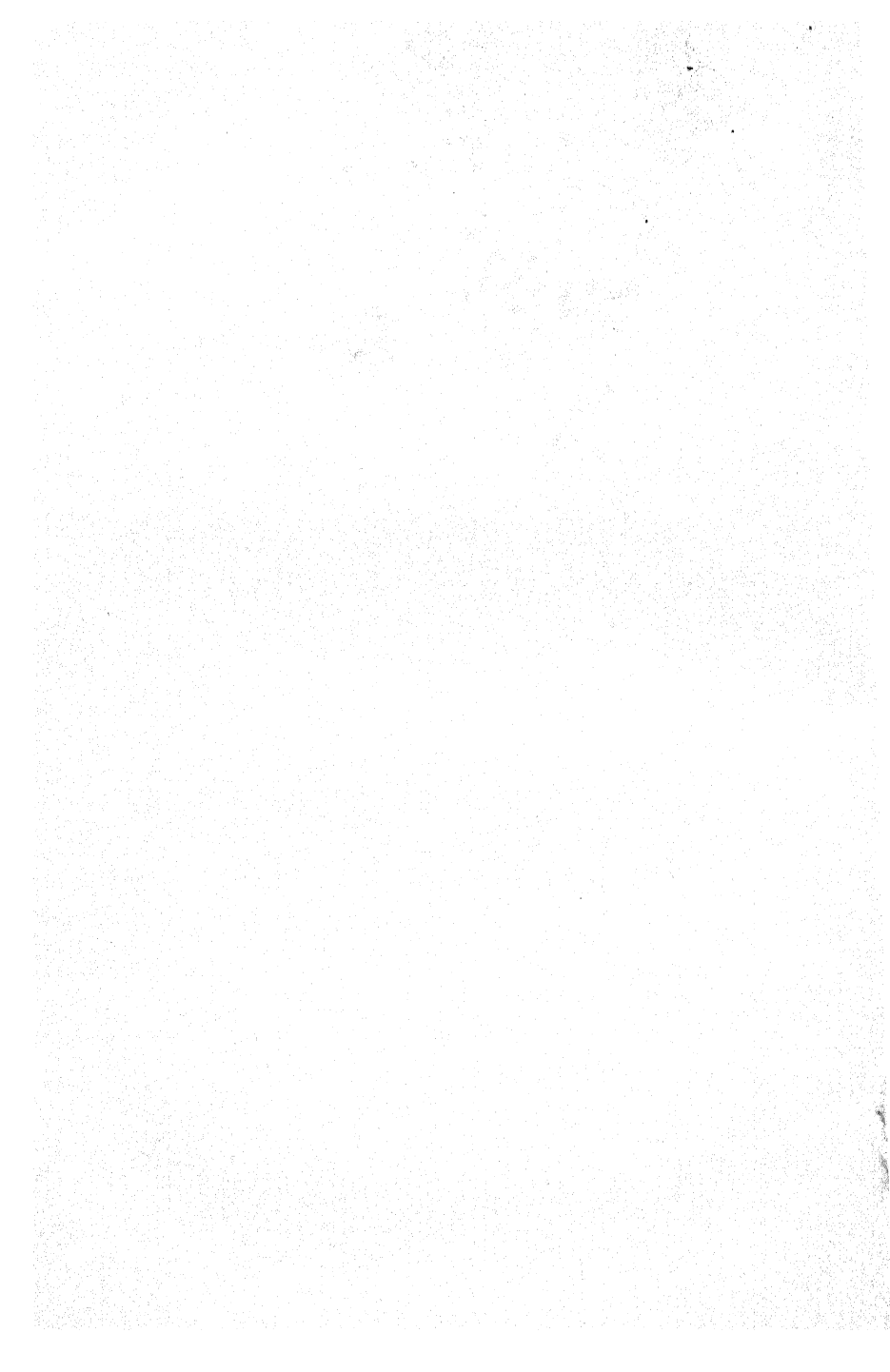
'I envy you! You have found within yourself the strength to refuse, which I could not do! . . . Believe me,' he said, on our way to the village, 'they have all assembled here and give me no peace, and assail me as though I belonged to them—tormenting me, and keeping me as in prison. This posing . . . these sittings. . . . You think I do not feel, do not realise, how nasty it all is! Don't I know that it is not what God wants of us, and not at all necessary for men? Who needs my portraits and statuette? Whose life will be any the better or brighter for them? It will not help the cause of truth half a step forward, and in general it has nothing to do with truth, and is not even connected with it. All these fancies are either really close to idolatry, or quite idle occupations of idle men. . . . But my family insist. . . . I suffered much when I had to be photographed for the 12th Volume of my Collected Works. I felt with all the vital part of my soul that I ought not to do it, and that having given up literary property, I must not help the success of my wife's edition by letting my face be placed on the first page . . . and any one will have the right to accuse me of base inconsistency. Of course it is inconsistent, and not only does not logically agree with, but is quite contrary to, my feelings—my sincere wishes. But as you see, it has ended in my photograph appearing in the 12th Volume. I humbled the pride which fills my whole being as wood fills the trunk of a tree, and placed myself in front of the black eye of the camera. I do not know in how far my attitude of mind is mirrored in the portrait, but I feel as though it ought to glimmer in every hair of my beard, and in every wrinkle of my face.'

The picture which aroused most interest at Yásnaya that year was, however, not a portrait of Tolstoy, but



TOLSTOY IN HIS ROOM AT YASNAYA POLYANA.

*After a painting by Képin, 1890.*



Gay's 'What is Truth,' which had been exhibited in Petersburg early in the year, and prohibited. After exhibiting it privately, Gay brought it to show to Tolstoy, who was deeply impressed by it.

Already in January, when Gay had sent him a drawing of it, Tolstoy had written him :

I am always thinking about you and your picture. I am longing to hear how it is received. I am troubled that the figure of Pilate, with that arm, seems wrong somehow. I don't say it is, I only ask. If the connoisseurs say that that figure is correct, I shall be satisfied. About the rest, I know, and have no need to ask any one's opinion.

Though Tolstoy knew very well that Pilate's arm is not well drawn, he was immensely pleased with the treatment of the subject, and the thought and feeling expressed. Feinermann tells us :

Leo Nikoláyevitch, when he saw that painting, was so shaken and agitated that for days after he could hardly speak of anything else.

'I am in raptures,' he said. 'That's a master! I confess that I myself only now understand the deep and true meaning of that short passage, which always appeared to me, as it has to all the Bible commentators, unfinished and abrupt. Pilate asked, "What is Truth?" and then went out to the crowd without waiting for a reply. And everybody reads and understands it that way. But this picture gives a different interpretation. Pilate does not *ask* what truth is, expecting a reply. No! in the form of a question, he contemptuously replies! When Christ says that he has come into the world as a witness of Truth, Pilate, with a laugh and a contemptuous gesture, throws the words carelessly at him: "And what is Truth? Truth is a relative thing; everybody takes it his own way!" and, evidently considering his retort decisive, he went out to the crowd. That is the light in which the moment is seized. It is new, it is profound; and how strongly and clearly the picture expresses it! That fat, shaven neck of the Roman Governor,



that half turned, large, well-fed, sensual body, that outstretched arm with its gesture of contempt—are all splendid—it is alive. It breathes, and impresses itself on the memory for ever. And the face? . . . Together with all the dignity of that Roman figure, there goes a slavish anxiety about himself: the mean trepidation of a petty soul. He is afraid he may be denounced at Rome. . . . And this smallness of soul is wonderfully caught by Gay, and notwithstanding the toga, and his height, and his majestic pose, Pilate appears so petty before the worn-out sufferer who has undergone, during the night, arrest, judgment, and insults. . . . A wonderful picture! That is the way to paint!’

Gay, touched and deeply moved by Leo Nikoláyevitch’s delight, embraced and kissed him, and said: ‘Do not praise it. . . . You will praise me so that I shall become proud. I am afraid of that. . . . I shan’t be able to paint!’

At Tolstoy’s instigation, P. M. Tretyakóv purchased this picture for his famous Gallery in Moscow; but an arrangement was made to allow it to be sent abroad for exhibition. In August Tolstoy wrote to Gay, saying that its success or failure in America would be all a matter of advertisement, and adding:

And you let yourself get excited about it! Shame on you, old fellow! I say, shame!—but I am the same myself, and prize worldly fame. But I struggle with myself hard and obstinately, and advise you to do the same. I am living well; the waves of the worldly sea wash over me, but I contrive not to get quite choked. . . . ‘They’ arrange everything, and our external life is not such as I can boast of, but my inner life pushes forward like a shoot.

On 20th December he again wrote to Gay:

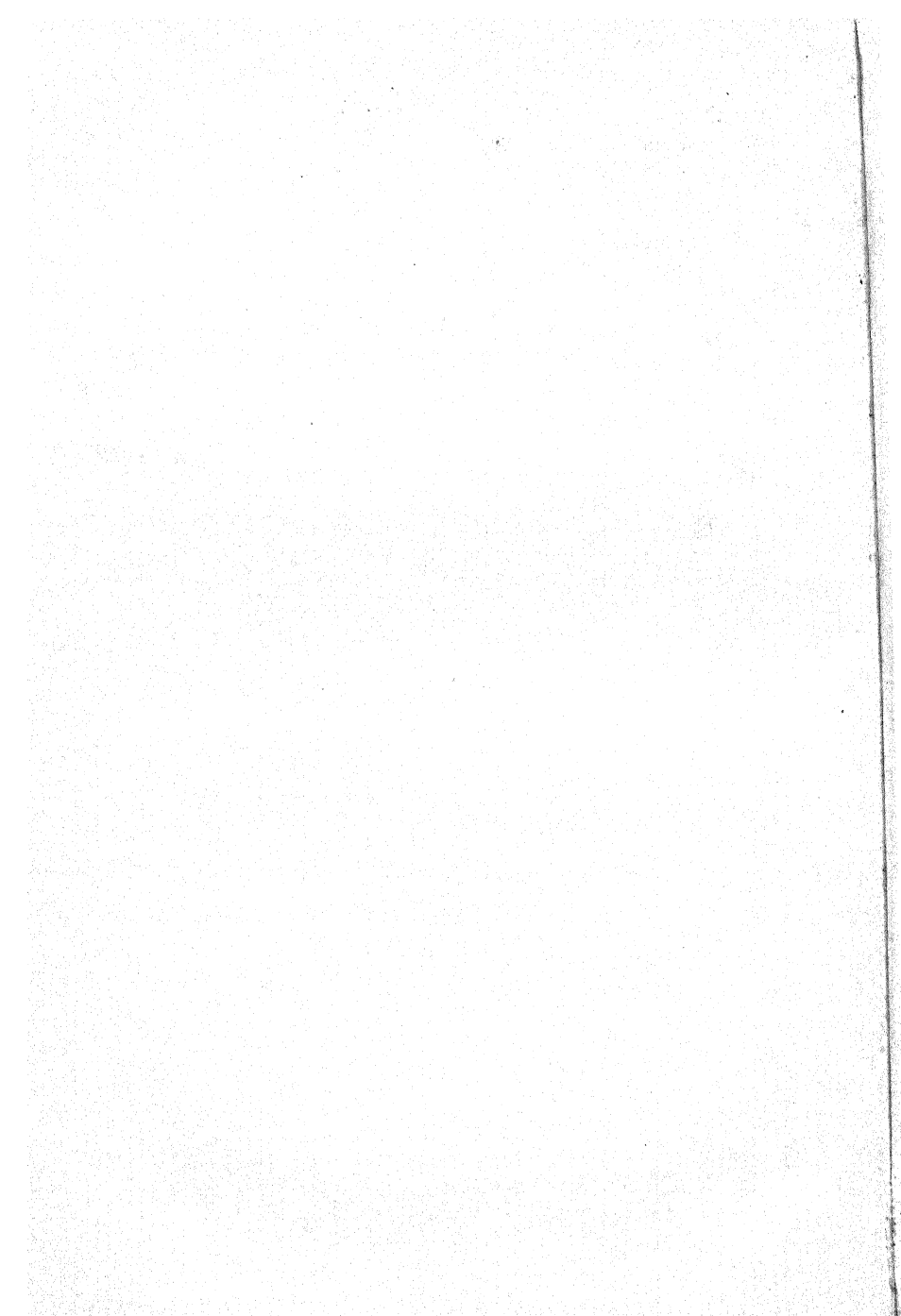
We have had visitors all this last time. . . . I understand your words that ‘man is more than canvas,’<sup>1</sup> and they help me to smother my regret at the slow progress of my work, which

<sup>1</sup> By which, Gay meant to say that he did not grudge letting his painting wait while he talked to a visitor, trying to convert him to the new faith.



‘WHAT IS TRUTH?’

*After a painting by Gay, 1890.*



is growing and seizing upon me. . . . in winter time—my best working time.

During the summer Tolstoy had visited Óptin Monastery with his daughter. He went there this time chiefly to see his sister, the Countess Mary Nikoláyevna Tolstoy, who is a nun in the Convent of Shámordin founded by Father Ambrose, near Óptin Monastery.

While there, Tolstoy also visited a relation of his, a voluntary lay-brother in the Monastery, whom he questioned about the monastic rules, and to whom he expressed approval of the Fasts, and of the non-admission of women into the Hermitage.

He then had a stormy interview with Father Ambrose, who immediately afterwards narrated that he gave Tolstoy his blessing when the latter entered his cell, and that Tolstoy kissed his hand; but at the end of their interview, to avoid being blessed, Tolstoy kissed his cheek. 'He is very proud,' added the Father breathlessly, quite exhausted by the discussion he had had with his visitor.

Tolstoy next called on K. N. Leóntief, an author and scholar, and an old acquaintance of his, to whom he put the question :

'How is it that you, an educated man, have become an Orthodox believer and have decided to live here?'

Leóntief replied: 'Live here, and you will yourself believe!'

'Naturally! When they shut one up here, one has to believe!' replied Tolstoy. Subsequently, at tea, he offered Leóntief a copy of his *Gospel in Brief*. In reply, the latter handed Tolstoy a pamphlet maintaining the identity and exactitude of the Gospels, and refuting Tolstoy's treatment of them. Whereupon Tolstoy remarked :

'This is a useful booklet: it advertises my Gospel.'

Leóntief thereupon flared up, and said :

'How can you, here in the Hermitage, ruled over by such a Saint as Father Ambrose, speak about "my Gospel"? . . .

Such talk is only permissible in Tómsk, or some out-of-the-way place like that !'

Tolstoy replied : ' Well, you 've plenty of friends. . . . Write to Petersburg, and perhaps they 'll banish me to Tómsk !'

In reality, something much worse than being sent to Tómsk very nearly befell Tolstoy ere many months had passed : but before that event—of which I will tell in another chapter—Alexander III granted the Countess S. A. Tolstoy an audience at the Aníchkof Palace. Her object in going to see him was to obtain permission to publish *The Kreutzer Sonata* in the thirteenth volume (which she was then preparing) of her edition of her husband's works.

The Emperor received her very graciously, and talked with her for nearly an hour. ' Tell me, Countess,' said he, ' why you make such persistent efforts to obtain permission to publish *The Kreutzer Sonata* ? It seems to me that that work, directed as it is against family and marriage, should be quite alien to you ! To you, as Leo Nikoláye-vitch's wife, it should be unpleasant.'

' Your Majesty, I ask your permission to print *The Kreutzer Sonata*, not as Leo Nikoláye-vitch's wife, but as the publisher of his works. Everything I undertake, I try to do as well as possible. To publish Leo Nikoláye-vitch's works well, it is in the first place necessary to publish them complete,' replied the Countess.

She made a very favourable impression on the Emperor, who after asking whether it was true that Tolstoy had a secret printing-press, and being assured that he had nothing of the kind, eventually allowed *The Kreutzer Sonata* to be included in the authorised Russian edition of his works, on the express condition that it should not be issued separately, or sold as a separate volume.

When, about a year later, Tolstoy published a repudiation of all rights in anything he had written after 1881,

various people hastened to avail themselves of that permission by issuing separate editions of *The Kreutzer Sonata*. The Countess was in no way to blame for this, and would have stopped it if she could. The Emperor, however, when he heard of these publications, was much displeased, and remarked: 'Well, if that woman has deceived me, I do not know whom I can trust!'

The chief things Tolstoy wrote in 1890, besides the *Afterword to The Kreutzer Sonata*, were an article on *Timothy Bóndaref* and a Preface to *Tokology*, a book by an American lady doctor, Alice Stockham. Being pleased by a legend entitled *Forty Years*, by Professor Kostomárof, but disliking its conclusion, Tolstoy added to it an ending of his own.

All this time the campaign of vituperation, denunciation, and insinuation which the ecclesiastics had commenced against Tolstoy when his *Confession* appeared, continued and even increased; and Pobedonóstsef, Head of the Holy Synod, falsely stated in his Annual Report to the Tsar that Tolstoy was no longer able to render assistance to the peasants, in consequence of his sons' extravagance. The elder sons thereupon wrote to the newspapers, repudiating this accusation.

As the years went on, the demands made by Churchmen for Tolstoy's suppression became more and more clamorous; but the time had not yet arrived for the employment of any weapon more tangible than slander.

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## CHAPTER XII

### THE FAMINE

[1891] Letter to Rahmánof. Moral perfection. Letters to Gay. 'Seekers are wearisome.' Tolstoy Colonies. His 63rd Birthday. 'Woman's charm.' Famine imminent. I. I. Raévsky. Tolstoy renounces copyrights. At work in famine district. Raévsky's death. How the hungry were fed. [1892] Self-dissatisfaction. Condition of the famine-stricken. Articles on the famine. *Account of Relief Supplied to the Famine-Stricken*. Narrowly escapes imprisonment. *The Kingdom of God is Within You*. Letter to Gay.

Tolstoy's didactic epistles owe their quality to the fact that he is tremendously alive, and vibrates with anxiety to put things right in the world. He sees what are life's great problems, even if he does not always see a true solution to them, and he has an ardent faith that if he can but put men on their guard against temptations, they will work wholeheartedly, as he himself has done, to establish the Kingdom of God.

That in 1891 his opinions were still evolving, is shown by such letters as the following—written to V. V. Rahmánof in March of that year: 1891

The thoughts and feelings that agitate you, those new horizons which you see before you, are just what agitate me, and in which I live . . . and in which Hilkóf lives, with whom I have been corresponding zealously. . . .

Christ's teaching consists in setting up the ideal of the Kingdom of God, to realise which we must be as perfect as the Father: i.e. the ideal is one of external as well as internal perfection, and the five Commandments are but milestones by



the side of that endless path, indicating points one should now have reached, or that one at least wishes to reach.

Perfection lies: (1) in considering all as equals and brothers, and loving them—Zulus, idiots, scoundrels and beasts—as one loves one's dearest; the milestone is the command not to be angry with one's brother; (2) in being perfectly pure; the milestone is, not to commit adultery; (3) in being perfectly free, not bound in any way; the milestone is, not to take oaths; (4) never to use violence for the protection of oneself or of others, nor against an animal; the milestone is, not to destroy evil by force; (5) not to have enemies; the milestone is, to do good to one's enemies.

Do not imagine that I defend the point of view I formerly expressed in *What do I Believe?*

I not only do not defend it, but am glad we have outlived it. When starting on a new road, one cannot help rejoicing at what one first sees before one, and it is excusable to mistake what is at the beginning of the road, for the journey's aim. . . .

Christianity is great, just in that it was not invented by Christ, but is a law humanity followed long before it was expressed, and which it always will follow, and is now following, in the persons even of those who do not recognise and do not wish to recognise it. . . . For those who know the meaning of Christianity, life is full of purpose and joy. . . . The success of a Christian life lies not in the degree of perfection attained (all degrees are equal, because the road is endless) but in accelerating the movement. The more rapid the movement, the stronger the life.

Unfortunately very few people possessed Tolstoy's abounding energy and tenacity of purpose; and what frequently occurred was that after being touched by his appeal and being induced to abandon their customary occupations, his followers found themselves at a loose end, and did not know what to do.

As his teaching spread, more and more people wished to change their way of life, and he often found it very difficult to know how to advise those who wished to be his disciples. On 21st June 1891, for instance, he wrote to Gay:

Seekers are wearisome. . . . I am told : 'Here is a man who wishes to change his way of life and live Godly, and therefore wants to see you and have a talk.' One's first feeling is unpleasant. I sometimes think it a matter plain enough for any one, and one in which I *cannot* help him; but then I say to myself: 'It is unpleasant—but that is all the more reason for doing what he perhaps requires.' But what to do for him, one does not know. . . . And one generally feels ashamed. . . . This year I have been much weaker physically, and have been busy with my writing [*The Kingdom of God is Within You*] which is not finished, but is progressing. I am also overwhelmed by visitors of all kinds, and you can't imagine how uncomfortable and conscience-stricken and sad I feel now, at harvest time, to be living in these mean, abominable surroundings [of comfortable ease]. Especially when I remember former years. . . .

And again, later in the year, he wrote :

We have many visitors, concerning whom I always try to remember your rule that 'man is more precious than canvas.' The results are wearisome and dull; though sometimes one gets a reward. Only one thing can free a man from this, namely work that he lives and feeds others by. But *we* not only must not refuse such demands, but must be glad if we are fit for the job. . . . Extremes always meet, and talk is both the emptiest and the greatest of things.

In March, he wrote to Feinermann, who had been living in an 'intelligent' Colony in the Province of Poltáva, a letter which again indicates that his mind was active and growing. He says of the unsuccessful attempt made by those educated men to live together and support themselves by agricultural labour :

You are too hard on your late experiment, or do not define correctly where the mistake lay. . . . It lay in raising to the rank of a principle, something that cannot be a principle. . . . Even Bóndaref's law of 'bread-labour' cannot be a principle. . . .

Our one general, basic principle is love, not in words only,

but in deed and in truth : that is to say, love that involves the spending and sacrificing of one's life for God and one's neighbour.

From that general principle flows the special principle of humility, meekness, and Non-Resistance.

The results of that, in all probability (I say in all probability, and not always, because one may be put in prison or something of that kind) will be agricultural work, handicraft, or even factory work ; at any rate, work of a kind for which there are fewest competitors, and least reward. . . .

It seems to me that a serious mistake generally made by the 'intelligent' Colonists was that they underrated, as Tolstoy himself underrates, the world's need of efficient management. If they really knew their job, they were qualified to perform a service urgently needed: that of directing and guiding the labour of others less competent than themselves ; but for that there was no sufficient scope in a small Colony of educated and eccentric people. On the other hand, when—as was usually the case—they were not practically competent and efficient, they wasted time, effort and material by starting a separate undertaking of their own, when they should have worked under the supervision of men who really knew the business.

In April, Tolstoy again wrote to Feinermann :

I was very much struck by what you say at the end of your letter about the constant tergiversations that go on among our friends.

You write, 'I take it to be a Divine punishment, and I have faith that it will end to our joy and spiritual uplifting. . . .' That very day I had written to Popóf, who is living with Tchertkóf in the Province of Vorónesh, that it seems to me that in our life (by 'our' I mean those who are travelling the same road with ourselves) a painful, or rather a seemingly painful time has arrived, demanding effort and firmness, and lacking the former joyousness and enthusiasm. . . . A time of disillusionment in efforts to realise our plans rapidly and fully : a time of apostasy and indifference—a time not even of persecution (which on the contrary animates) but of contempt.

In fact, as that letter indicates, the first enthusiasm of the Tolstoy movement was dying down. It had become plain that Tolstoy's own place was at home, and it had also become evident that the Colonies, started as a result of the interest he had aroused, were neither going to be materially successful, nor to ease the spiritual struggles of those who joined them.

Under these circumstances Tolstoy became yet more absorbed in his writings, and less inclined to encourage changes in external life. The theme that chiefly occupied him was the principle of Non-Resistance in its application to Government, his thesis being the harmfulness of all Government that 'rests on force,' and his conclusion—Christian Anarchism: the repudiation of all participation in Government, civil or military, and the refusal both of army-service and of the payment of taxes.

To those who do not know him personally, the fact that while he escaped the burden of property, others paid the taxes for him, gives an air of unreality to this teaching; and even those who, like myself, are well aware of the intense ardour of his sincerity, have still to remember that the efficacy of his prescription has not been tested, and that he can therefore not speak with the same authority as though he had tried it in practice.

Zinger gives us a glimpse of him at this time, namely on his 63rd birthday, when a large company had assembled at Yásnaya. Tolstoy accepted 'congratulations' (the equivalent of our 'many happy returns') in a kindly, jocular spirit, and took an interest in everything and everybody. To Zinger, the mathematician, he remarked:

I was born in the year '28 on the 28th day of the month, and 28 has been the luckiest number for me all my life [he left the army when he was 28]. I only lately learnt that 28 is a specially 'perfect' number in mathematics. Now, Mathematician, do you know what 'perfect' numbers are?

Zinger knew what they were, but had forgotten that 28 was one of them.

'Yes, yes, it is!' said Tolstoy. "'Perfect" numbers are those equal to the sum of all the numbers into which they can be divided. 28 divides by 14, 7, 4, 2, and 1.  $1 + 2 + 4 + 7 + 14 = 28$ . There are very few such numbers.' [Among the first 10,000, only 6, 28, 496, and 8128.]

Turning to E. I. Popóv, a stalwart Tolstoyan, he spoke of self-love and self-satisfaction. . . . 'How well Lichtenberg puts it: "He who is in love with himself, need not fear to have many rivals"'; and then he turned from one to another, with a suitable word for each.

N. N. Figner, the celebrated tenor, and his wife, Medea Figner, the soprano, were there. Among the thirty who sat down to dinner were a young couple whose engagement was not yet formally announced; and during the meal Tolstoy started a game of what in England is called 'Russian Scandal.'

'Well, what has come of it?' said he. I started it by saying: 'It is pleasant to watch the lover and his betrothed.'

'And it reached me,' replied Figner, 'as: "Why is this Special Official confused?"'

The evening passed off gaily. The Figners sang admirably. Tolstoy asked for one after another of his favourite songs, praised the singers, and encored this or that piece.

The young folk played *petits jeux*.

No one, when the party broke up and the guests drove off, that warm August evening, foresaw the terrible scenes Tolstoy and his family would witness before another year had passed.

Zinger tells us that one day, when he was talking to Tatiána Lvóvna, who was pouring out tea:

Leo Nikoláyevitch, who was passing, listened to our conversation, which—apropos of Sophia Kovalévsky, who had lately died—had turned to the rôle of women in science.

Tatiána Lvóvna agreed with me that one must not consider woman's incapacity for original scientific research fully proven.

'In my opinion,' said Leo Nikoláyevitch, 'if women were as capable of scientific thought as men, it would be unjust, for then they would have an unquestionable superiority. Woman

has a natural superiority—in her femininity, her *charm*. It is not a question of her fascination for men, but of that special charm which causes children, for instance, always to love a woman most. . . . If we were now to ask some child or some inhabitant of the moon, whom, for instance, he would choose to pour out tea: you, me, or Tánya, he would be sure to choose Tánya.'

Feinermann, visiting Yásnaya at this time, found Tolstoy beginning to be depressed and agitated about the famine then imminent. Tolstoy said to him :

Have you heard? It has already begun! Here the peasants have not yet finished threshing, while there, in the Province of Vorónesh, they have nothing left to eat, and are already sitting idle in their houses.

It is the first groan of an approaching calamity. I feel it, and ache inwardly, as a rheumatic body aches before rainy weather.

The other day a Chamberlain came down from Petersburg: an affable, well-groomed, clean gentleman with whiskers. He travels first-class, and brings a million roubles for the starving. They fling a morsel from Petersburg! But do you think even that will go straight to the hungry mouths? No! It will first make a long round of dozens of offices, and will everywhere be crumpled and squeezed by dozens of official hands that will pinch off bits for themselves; and when only a tiny pellet remains, it will be flung disdainfully to the beggared villages. . . .

What use is it for these glib gentlemen to bounce down on us, and spend their evenings with the landowners, telling them merry stories about Petersburg life, when we need hands, feet, and eyes, always on the spot and watching our wants every moment? . . . One must see this want—one must breathe it, and be able to sound an alarm-bell calling for help, as is done when a fire breaks out!

Tolstoy had at that time little thought of organising relief for the famine-stricken, but he was preparing to write an article to destroy the optimistic delusion spread by the

Government to the effect that there would be no famine but only a shortness of grain in certain Provinces! A. M. Novikóv, who was for three years tutor in the family, has told how it happened that Tolstoy was ultimately drawn into active relief work.

Mention has already been made of Raévsky, an old friend of Tolstoy's from the days when they were both ardent gymnasts. The two men often disagreed, though they esteemed one another.

Raévsky, for instance, would tell ironically of Tolstoy's former enthusiasms: how eager he used to be about bee-keeping and farming; at one time fixing the maximum acreage a squire could profitably farm, and saying that 'intensive farming can only be carried on on 80 acres, with more land than that, it will always yield less profit'; and at another time deciding that it is more profitable to invest one's whole capital in large tracts of virgin soil on the borders of civilisation, and himself purchasing a large estate in Samára; then strictly observing the rites of the Orthodox Church, including Fasts and fête-days, like any peasant; and then breaking away from the Church altogether, and devising a faith of his own. Raévsky also differed sharply from Tolstoy as to the value of the natural sciences. In Tolstoy's eyes almost all that modern science does is useless or false, and its chief achievements merely enable the few to separate themselves yet more widely from the many, and increase man's power to slay his brother. Raévsky, who had taken Honours in Pure Mathematics at Moscow University, appreciated science, and knew the real service it has rendered, and is rendering, to mankind.

Tolstoy's constant striving towards personal perfection, absorbing as it did both his thoughts and his feelings, caused his conversation to turn chiefly on ethical themes. Raévsky, of a more practical turn, was chiefly interested in public questions of local government and administration.

Tolstoy's efforts at self-improvement were naturally and inevitably accompanied by an indictment of the ordinary ways

of life, and it is difficult to separate condemnation from some measure of hostility. But a live man is always sensitive to hostility, and so it happened that Raévsky often found himself in some antagonism with Tolstoy.

One day, returning from a visit, he was quite indignant at the recollection of the expression 'fatted calf,' Tolstoy had used with reference to his (Tolstoy's) youngest son.

'What virtues does he demand from a two-year-old baby?' exclaimed Raévsky.

Tolstoy, of course, was merely expressing his dissatisfaction with the system of feeding-up, and the deification of nourishment; but Raévsky thought first of the child, and did not consider the system.

The conversations at Yásnaya on ethical themes kept the Tolstoyans and semi-Tolstoyans in a constant state of exaltation. Always struggling with himself and analysing himself, Tolstoy reacted on those around him; and as people passed backwards and forwards between the two families, the effect was also felt at the Raévskys'.

Raévsky himself, for instance, after hearing the discussions about the wastefulness and harmfulness of smoking, suddenly gave up the use of tobacco. Nor did he long remain indifferent to what Tolstoy was saying about riches, poverty, and personal work. He tried to justify to himself the social position he occupied, by dwelling on the enlightening influence he, as squire, was able to exercise on the peasants, and by his activity on the Zémstvo. All this, however, did not satisfy him, and when the approach of famine revealed a crisis calling for extraordinary exertions, he felt that the time had come to pay the debt he owed to the people, and he threw himself with enthusiasm into the work. The true meaning of his privileged position as a landowner now appeared to him to be, that his possessions, and those of his class, represent an insurance fund safeguarding the peasants from starvation. In July 1891, on returning from an Extraordinary Session of the Epifánsky Zémstvo (District Council) Raévsky invited his three sons



and Novikóf to take a census of the crops and stores in a neighbouring district. Novikóf says:

In August I returned to Yásnaya Polyána. Here things were much quieter: the famine was less mentioned than the beggars and burnt-outs. Tolstoy inquired about the famine district, and began to say that there are always many hungry, but that the only way to help a horse to drag its load is *to get off its back*.

To me those words sounded dull and lifeless. I knew that Raévsky was rushing about from one District Council to another while Tolstoy was sitting at Yásnaya and writing—or preparing to write—that there always is a famine somewhere, and that it is immoral to prepare to feed the famine-stricken and to imagine *that* to be a good and necessary activity, while our whole way of life causes more and more people to become destitute. Yet how fine, convincing and true it all sounded, when Tolstoy himself expounded it to us!

But before a month had passed, all had changed. Raévsky found time, while rushing from one Council to another, to call at Yásnaya. He had determined to try to arouse Tolstoy, and induce him to join the ranks of those who were feeding the hungry. He began by describing scenes in the famine district, and he persuaded Tolstoy to go and see them for himself. Such outings always attracted Tolstoy.

He went to the famine district for a couple of days, in order to write about it with better knowledge—and he remained there almost continuously for two years!

During that visit, Tolstoy suggested to Raévsky to start free eating-houses for the destitute; and the latter promptly made an experiment on a small scale.

Before speaking about the famine I must, however, mention that, while still at Yásnaya, Tolstoy had written to the papers announcing that—as he received many inquiries and requests concerning the publication, translation, or permission to perform, his writings and plays—he wished it to be known that he gave free permission to all who desired to do so, to publish in Russia or abroad, in Russian or in a translation, and also to perform on the stage, all the works

he had written since 1881, as well as all those he might publish in future.

This announcement settled a question which had been long in dispute between his wife and himself. She retained the copyright in all his works antecedent to and including *Anna Karénina*. Publishers might scramble as they pleased for anything written subsequently, the Countess having only the same right as any one else. Owing to the circumstances of the case, however, she had always the advantage of knowing in advance what was coming.

I do not think that this decision was a good one to ensure the best form of publication for the works, or to safeguard the interests of the public. Certainly it was bad for the publishers and booksellers, for everything that tends to convert trade into a gambling transaction is undesirable, and the right to scramble for the new works of a popular writer offers a temptation to rush books out without due care in their production. The harm that might have resulted has been minimised by the Countess's action in herself publishing the works in reliable editions at a moderate price. Other publishers have, for the most part, realised that the offer was not much use to them, and have therefore not scrambled or gambled over it as wildly as might have been expected.

With reference to translations, the announcement left matters where they were before. Russia not having joined the International Convention, Russian books can be freely taken by foreign translators. A translator's copyright in his own version was not infringed by Tolstoy's announcement, for he of course only gave away what was his own.

With reference to the royalties due for the performance of his plays at the Imperial Theatres, a curious case arose. According to the official regulations, a certain sum is paid to the author for each performance of a play, and it was decided that if Tolstoy refused to accept what was due to him, the money should go for the improvement of the

Imperial ballet! As the lesser of two evils, therefore, Tolstoy consented to his wife accepting these payments, and she devotes the money to charitable purposes. From the private Russian theatres, which frequently perform his plays, he receives nothing.

The indefiniteness that arises from the abandonment of copyright supplies, I think, a good reason for not commending Tolstoy's example for general imitation; but when one looks at the matter from his personal standpoint, as a man who wished to be free from the taint of property-owning, it is at once evident that the course he adopted had many advantages. To begin with, it was in accord with his general attitude and principle. It freed him (or seemed likely to free him) from business worries. His task is to write boldly and clearly what he holds to be true and important. It is for the world to see to it that his writings circulate. Long before this, he had decided to ignore the Censor and to write freely; and had he continued to attend personally to the business of publication, he would have found himself involved in endless and often futile attempts to publish in Russia such scraps as might possibly be allowed, and in all sorts of complications concerning the publication of the Russian text abroad, and the translations of his works into various languages; and all this while his correspondence was liable to police surveillance. He would have been swamped in complicated business details. It was a kind of work for which he had neither inclination nor aptitude, and the results of which must have been detrimental to the quality of his writings.

Moreover, the repudiation by the world's foremost writer of all personal profit from the works he has published during thirty years, stands as a striking proof of his integrity. He might have drawn a huge income, and spent it for the benefit of others—'making a pipe of himself'—but we should not have been as sure as we now are, that his work was entirely unbiassed by mercenary motives.

At this time the vexed question of the disposal of

Tolstoy's estates was also settled. They were divided up among his wife and children in portions as nearly equal as possible. The share received by the Countess Sophia Andréyevna did not amount to more than what she had brought as a dowry at the time of her marriage; and, like the other shares, it was not much over Rs. 50,000 (about £5000). Yásnaya Polyána went to her and to Iván, the youngest son, as it had come to Leo Tolstoy himself as youngest son. After Iván's death, in 1895, it passed to his brothers, but their mother manages it, and they do not interfere in any way. The other estates in Central Russia went to the elder children, and the house in Moscow, together with a small piece of the Samára estate, to Leo Lvóvitch. When, later on, he wished to sell that house in order to buy one in Petersburg, his mother bought it of him. The rest of the Samára estate, of 6500 desyatinas (about 17,500 acres) went to the younger children: Michael, Andrew, and Alexandra. Mary, following her father's teaching, refused to accept any property; but her mother, feeling sure that the girl would change her mind, took charge of her portion, and when Mary married in 1897 she accepted it, and at her death in 1906 left it to her husband, Prince Obolénsky.

The position of things when Tolstoy went to the famine district was a curious one.

The Russian Government had stoutly denied the famine, and looked askance at all private initiative in the matter. Tolstoy was at war with the Orthodox Church, and no sooner did he take part in organising relief, than the representatives of that Church publicly denounced him as Antichrist. Moreover, he himself disapproved of what he was doing. I remember, after the famine was over, his explaining to me that a man's real, useful activity consists only in what he does with his own brain and hand, and telling me that his famine-relief work did not afford him satisfaction. He used his favourite simile about 'making a

pipe of oneself,' but it seemed to me that he did not realise how very useful a good water-pipe often is. He saw that a man who pumps water and carries it in a pail to those who want it, does good work ; but I never heard him acknowledge that an engineer who plans a water-supply efficiently, and gets the pipes well laid to take water into the heart of a city, does any good. The manual labour at the pump appeals to him ; while the probability that a Water Company will pay dividends, or that a Municipal Government will earn a profit on its water-works and thereby 'steal from the people,' repels him ; and the strenuousness of his attack, his habit of suspecting the motives of those with whom he disagrees, and the real complexity of the problem, have hitherto baffled all attempts to separate the very considerable amount of truth that lies embedded in his philippics, from the large amount of prejudice they contain.

In this connection, the words of Jane Addams recur to my mind :

There is a common-sense in the mass of mankind which one cannot neglect with impunity, just as there is sure to be an eccentricity in the differing and reforming individual which we perhaps do well to challenge.

Leaving for the moment Tolstoy's economic theories, let us note his practical activity at this crisis, which evoked more widespread sympathy and warm approval than almost any other incident in his career.

Since 1881 he has generally, as I have just explained, taken no money for his writings ; but with what he received for his articles on the famine, as well as what other people gave him—helped by his daughters Tatiana and Mary, and his niece V. Kouzmínsky, and coached by Raévsky in practical details—he set to work opening eating-houses and organising other help for those upon whom the terrible calamity of an almost complete failure of the rye-harvest had fallen.

His daughter Mary used to tell of the pleasure it gave her to watch the two 'old men,' as she called Raévsky and

her father, going about together at the seat of the famine and talking and laughing in friendly comradeship.

For Raévsky it was an occasion of spiritual exaltation to find himself fighting the famine hand-in-hand with Tolstoy, and to feel the work supported by the great stream of contributions which flowed in as a result of letters that, in November 1891, the Countess S. A. Tolstoy published in the papers, announcing that her husband and family had settled in the famine district to render help to the starving.

Returning from a Zémstvo meeting that month, in bad weather, Raévsky met some destitute peasants going on foot from one village to another, seeking work or begging. He gave them a lift; and on coming to a hill, himself got out and walked. It was snowing, and his feet got wet, and he had still many miles to drive before reaching home.

Next day he was ill, but yet insisted on going to a Zémstvo meeting in a town some thirty miles distant. He returned home suffering from influenza, and died a few days later; having lost his life doing his duty as a County Councillor. Had such experiences come to Tolstoy oftener, or had this one occurred before his views were definitely formed, I think his disapproval of Governmental work might have been modified.

To me it seems that the future welfare of the human race depends largely on the extent to which the spirit of conscientious devotion to the service of man actuates those who hold official positions: those engaged in the very work Tolstoy so dislikes and so strongly condemns. It is not their work that is wrong, but the spirit in which it is often undertaken. One need only name such men as Hampden or Lincoln, to disprove Tolstoy's view of the necessarily corrupting influence of public life. I even believe that to stand aside from public affairs may do a man more harm than to participate in them, just as it may be worth while getting one's hands tarred in order to fix up a reliable fence.

Raévsky's death deeply distressed Tolstoy, who offered to write his obituary; but Mrs. Raévsky declined the offer, as

her husband had always avoided publicity, and such an article would, she felt, have run counter to his wishes.

His works, however, lived after him ; for Tolstoy, in his organisation of relief, made constant use of the knowledge he had gathered from Raévsky's experience, and continued throughout that winter and the next to feed the destitute in four districts, till the good harvest of 1893 came, and the work drew to its natural close.

A history of the famine of 1891 and 1892, or even of the part played in it by the Tolstoy family, would be a very voluminous affair. The two eldest sons worked in the Tchern District of the Province of Toúla, and Leo Lvóvitch worked in the Government of Samára, till his health broke down. Tatiána Lvónna worked with her father and sister at Begítchevka till she fell ill and had to go home for a time ; but after her recovery she again returned to the work. Tolstoy's wife remained, with the four little children, in Moscow, and acted as a centre to which contributions flowed. Of her, Anna Seuron says :

The Countess took a warm part in helping the sufferers, and was an inestimable support to the Count. Hundreds of typhus patients received linen, who but for their help would have had no change of garments. Quantities of medicine were supplied. Charitable people of both sexes were found, who tended the sick, partly for payment, but in most cases gratuitously, from a wish to serve their fellows.

All this time the Countess had to attend to a very large correspondence, and in dealing with it showed herself, as usual, prompt, energetic, and practical. Contributions flowed in from all parts : shiploads of grain from America, and large donations from the Society of Friends (the Quakers) in England.

The section of the famine district in which Tolstoy worked, lay towards the southern part of the Governments of Toúla and Ryazán ; Begítchevka being about 100 miles south, or south-east, of Yásnaya Polyána ; and the following letter from him to Rahmánof (who was setting out to

render aid in another district) will give the reader some idea of the way in which the work was done :

If you wish to open a Soup Kitchen in the Loukoyánsky District, where things seem to be very bad, do as follows :

When you have chosen a place amid the hungriest villages, collect there a store of flour, bran, potatoes, cabbages, beetroot, peas, lentils, oatmeal, and salt, or what you can get of these things, and then go to one of the villages and choose near the middle of it (if it has not more than 30 or 40 houses) one of the very poorest families (or two, if the village is twice as big) and offer to supply the householder with his food if he will bake bread and cook for the destitute, the old folk, the weak and the children, or the not old but hungry—up to the number of 30 or 40 persons. Then make a list, with the Elder's aid, of those who ought to be fed. Give out the provisions, and visit the Soup Kitchen, trying the food, counteracting abuses, and admitting those who are on the list and who apply. The thing is as simple and as easily arranged as though it were a process of nature. . . .

I am living here on the estate of my acquaintance Raévsky, a very good and practical man (a great Liberal and a friend of the people) with my two daughters Tánya and Másha, and my niece V. Kouzmínsky, and they work heartily.

We have started 18 Soup Kitchens, and our neighbours the Filósofs have 6. A few days ago two other helpers arrived: one a Law-student, and the other a Naturalist, who have taken their degrees. Moscow merchants are also opening Soup Kitchens. Everywhere this thing is spreading out like a net. And there is much good in it. There is also evil: namely one's arbitrary discretion, which one cannot quite get rid of, and the false rôle one plays. . . .

In my friend E. A. Brayley Hodgetts' book, *In the Track of the Russian Famine*, Raévsky's country-house, in which Tolstoy stayed, is thus described :

Small and humble, like most of the country residences in this district, it did not stand separate and alone, like the houses of other country gentlemen, but at the end of a large and



populous village. Tolstoy's room was a small one of about 10 feet by 5. A small iron bedstead occupied the length of one wall. Near the window stood a rough writing-table. There was a shelf of books. The room was destitute of anything approaching to ornament, and there was not the vestige of a carpet or curtains, or any of the signs of English comfort. 'That,' said my guide [Raévsky's manager] 'is the sacred chamber. Here the great man lives and works. That is Count Tolstoy's room when he is here. I occupy it in his absence.'

How the work of feeding the hungry was carried on, is told in one of Tolstoy's articles :

Generally, both in our eating-houses and in those of our neighbour, Mme. N. Filosófova, who is working independently of us, the number of people fed is always one-third of the people in the village. . . .

In four weeks, without making any special effort, we opened and started in 20 villages, thirty eating-houses, in which about 1500 people are fed. . . .

These eating-houses are particularly interesting, because they have served as an object-lesson of the erroneousness of the belief firmly rooted among the peasants themselves, that rye bread is the most appetising, wholesome, and cheap form of food. They have shown beyond a doubt that peas, millet, maize, potatoes, beet, cabbage, oats, and pea-soup, satisfy hunger better and form a more wholesome and cheaper food than bread. In places where the Zémstvo distributed rye, the eating-houses provided no bread, and the people brought a very little of their own with them, or sometimes none at all; yet they got through the winter in good health, and with their hunger well satisfied, eating each day about 2 copecks' [ $\frac{1}{2}$ d.] worth of cooked food and 2 or 3 copecks' worth of rye bread; whereas when they ate nothing but rye bread, they consumed at least  $7\frac{1}{2}$  copecks' [nearly 2d.] worth of food.

To give the people two meals a day, cost only from thirty to thirty-six pence per person per month.

The following was a sample menu for a week, in a village

where, thanks to the distribution of rye made by the Zémstvo, the people had rye bread of their own :

Monday, cabbage-soup and porridge ; Tuesday, potato-soup, pea-broth, and the same for supper ; Wednesday, pea-soup and boiled potatoes, and for supper, peas with *kvas* ; Thursday, cabbage-soup, pea-broth, and the same for supper ; Friday, potato-soup, millet-broth, and the same for supper ; Saturday, cabbage-soup and boiled potatoes, and for supper, potatoes with *kvas* ; Sunday, potato-soup and porridge, and for supper, peas with *kvas*.

The author of this menu was guided by what food-stuffs he had at his disposal at the time. With beets, from which during the winter the favourite beet-stew was made, and with oats broth, this menu can be varied still more, without making the food more expensive.

The people highly approved of the food supplied, though it contained no meat at all. Brayley Hodgetts, in his book already referred to, gives evidence which is supported by other witnesses :

‘It is excellent food,’ the people round us exclaimed in chorus. ‘God bless the good Count and all his friends, for giving us such good meals ! What should we have done without him ? We never want to eat better food than this !’ . . .

The same writer goes on to say :

The peasants in this village struck me as being much less distrustful and more honest, than in any I had yet visited.

On our way back we met numbers of little boys carrying books. They were coming from the village school, founded by the Count and now captured by the local priest. The boys looked bright and truthful, as healthy boys should, and showed us their books with fearless frankness. It was evident, from all I saw, that Count Tolstoy is exercising an influence of the most powerful kind upon these simple folk.

Tolstoy would not have been himself, had he been satisfied with what he was doing. Self-indictment, as well as indictment of society, is as natural to him as breathing ; and the

following letter to Feinermann, written on 9th November 1891, when the work was at its height, is a very characteristic utterance :

There is much here that is not right. Money from Sophia Andréyevna, and money that has been collected; and the relation between the feeders and the fed—there is no end to the sin of it all; but I cannot sit at home and write. I feel the necessity of taking part and doing something. I know I am not doing the right thing, but I can't do the right thing, and I can't do nothing. I dread the praise of men, and ask myself every hour, 'Am I not sinning?' and I try to judge myself strictly, and to act as in God's sight, and for His sake.

I have sent one article about the famine to *Philosophical Questions*, but I don't know whether it will be allowed, and another to *The Russian Messenger*. . . . I am now writing again. But I don't feel drawn to write about this [the famine]. I want to finish a long work which is nearly completed [*The Kingdom of God is Within You*].

In December he again wrote as follows :

Thank you for letting me have news of how you are living. I am living abominably. I don't myself know how I was trapped into this work of feeding the starving. . . . It is unsuitable for me to feed those by whom I am myself fed; but I have been dragged into it, and I find myself distributing the vomit thrown up by the rich. I feel that this is abominable and disgusting, but I cannot stand aside; not that I do not think I ought to, for I do think so, but that I have not the strength to do it.

I began by writing an article on the famine, in which I expressed my chief idea: namely that it has all come about as a result of our sin in separating ourselves from our brothers, and enslaving them; and that there is only one way to save ourselves and mend matters: namely, by changing our lives, destroying the wall that separates us from the people, returning what we have taken from them, and drawing nearer to them and blending with them, as a natural result of abandoning our privileges. With this article, which I sent to *Philosophical*

*Questions*, Grot has been worrying for a month, and is still worrying.

It has been toned down, and allowed, and forbidden, but it has not yet appeared. The thoughts evoked by that article led me to settle among the famine-stricken. Then my wife wrote a letter which has caused donations to be sent; and almost without my noticing it, I have become a distributor, and am as it were under an obligation to the people here.

The misery grows continually, while the aid grows less rapidly, and therefore, having once drifted into this position, it has become impossible for me to stand aside.

This is what we do: we buy rye and other food, and in the huts of the poorest villagers we arrange—No! not we, for the owners of the huts do everything themselves—we only give the means, that is, the provisions for the meals; and the weak and old, the children, and sometimes the middle-aged too, are fed. There is much evil, and much good too, in it; I say that, not of our work, but of the good-feeling evoked. The other day a peasant, who has grown rich in Kaloúga, offered to let eighty horses be sent from a famine-stricken spot to the Masálsky District, where they will be fed through the winter and sent back in spring.

The Kaloúga peasant made the offer, and the peasants here collected eighty horses in one day, and are ready to send them off, putting entire trust in their unseen stranger-brothers. . . .

‘You know, those horses came back in spring, safe and well-fed!’ said Leo Tolstoy to me, laughing, when we met later. Of all the things done that winter, that was the best!

In February 1892 he wrote to another friend:

If I had had any doubt left as to whether money can do any good, using it to buy grain, and feeding some thousands of people, has quite convinced me that one can do nothing but harm with it. 1892

You will say: ‘Why then do you go on?’

Because I cannot escape, and because—beyond a feeling of great depression—I experience nothing, and therefore think I am not doing this work for my personal satisfaction.

The oppression comes not from the practical work, which on the contrary is joyous and attractive, and not from the occupation, which I do not like; but from a constant, inner feeling of being ashamed of myself.

Please don't seek any general meaning in these words of mine: I write simply *au courant de la plume*, to a kindred spirit, who I know will understand what I feel from a mere hint.

I much dislike, or rather am often uncomfortable, when people too well-disposed towards me, take me seriously, seeking and demanding a complete correspondence between my words and my deeds.

'How is it you say this, and do that?'

Yes, I am not a Saint, and have never given myself out for one. I am a man, often carried away; and sometimes, or rather always, saying not quite what I think and feel—not that I do not wish to say it, but that I am unable, and often exaggerate, or simply blunder.

That is so in words. In deeds the case is yet worse. I am quite a weak man, of vicious habits, who wishes to serve the God of Truth, but constantly goes astray.

When people consider me as one who cannot make a mistake, every error seems like a lie or a piece of hypocrisy.

But if I am understood to be a weak man, the discord between my words and acts appears as a sign of weakness, but not as a lie or an hypocrisy. And then I appear to be what I am: a sorry but sincere man, now and always wishing with his whole soul to be quite good: to be, that is, a worthy servant of God.

The work of relief spread; and Tolstoy experienced much difficulty in finding competent and reliable helpers. His friend and mine, A. N. Dounáef, a Director of a Moscow bank, told me that Tolstoy said to him: 'Ah, if only you would come and help us organise!' Dounáef replied that it was impossible for him to get away from his bank. 'Yes,' replied Tolstoy, 'do you know what I have noticed? Those who come to help—those who are free to come at the first call—are people who are disengaged because they are inefficient. The sort of men one needs are already engaged in necessary work and cannot be spared from their posts.'

As time went on Tolstoy became more and more disappointed with his work ; and on 3rd April 1892 he noted in his Diary : ' My work as conductor of contributions is terribly repugnant to me.' It must have required a tremendous effort to enable him to persevere with the work, as he did, for another year.

Some account of the activity of the Tolstoy family during the famine, is given in J. Stadling and Will Reason's book, *In the Land of Tolstoi*. Stadling visited Begitchevka in March 1892, and tells how he drove with Tolstoy's daughter, Mary, to a neighbouring village where there was already one eating-house, and where she had to arrange to open another one for children. What he saw in the peasants' huts appalled him. It was not merely the hunger, cold, and lack of fuel, but the terrible amount of disease. In one hut he found a man and his wife, four children, a grandfather, a cow, a foal, and three sheep, all in one room ; and this was by no means exceptional. In hut after hut they found spotted typhus, scurvy, and smallpox, as well as other diseases. He records his conversation as they drove back to Begitchevka :

'What is your impression from your first village visit?' asked the Countess.

'Terrible!' was all I could say. 'Are you not afraid of catching smallpox or typhus?'

'Afraid! It is immoral to be afraid. Are you afraid?' she replied.

'No, I have never been afraid of infection when visiting the poor,' I said. 'It is terrible to see such hopeless misery. It makes me sick to think of it.'

'And is it not shameful of us to allow ourselves so much luxury while our brothers and sisters perish from want and nameless misery?' she added.

'But you have sacrificed all the comforts and luxuries of your rank and position, and stepped down to the poor to help them,' I rejoined.

'Yes,' she said, 'but look at our warm clothes and other comforts, unknown to our suffering brothers and sisters!'

‘But what good would it do them if we dressed in rags and lived on the verge of starvation?’

‘What right have we,’ she retorted, ‘to live better than they?’

I made no reply, but glanced wonderingly into the eyes of this remarkable girl, and saw there a large tear trembling; something seemed to press on my heart and threatened to choke me.

Even Tolstoy’s powers of endurance were often taxed to the utmost by the work and the misery that surrounded it; and he was sometimes so exhausted that he could with difficulty express the simplest thought or even name an article he required.

‘Tánya,’ he would say to his daughter, ‘we must be sure, to-morrow, to send. . . .’ but his usually retentive memory refused to act, and he was unable to say what had to be sent, or whereto.

His spirits, however, always rose at the least encouragement. Stadling tells how one day, on his return from visiting a neighbouring village, he found Tolstoy very cheerful:

He talked and laughed merrily, and his eyes fairly beamed with joy. The cause of his delight was soon told. He had finally overcome all obstacles and established a children’s eating-room. It had cost him many a weary day of struggle against difficulties. The mere procuring of suitable food was hard enough; but there was also the ignorance, superstition and folly of the peasants, and the bitter opposition of the clergy to overcome. The peasants wanted the children’s food brought to their homes; but Tolstoy knew well that in that case the children would get but little of it. Then the priests frightened the peasants with tales of learned theologians having conclusively proved out of the Book of Revelations that Tolstoy was veritably Antichrist. The story of his branding the peasants on the forehead to seal them to the power of the devil was preached from the pulpit, and it was said that the Count paid the peasants Rs.8 apiece as purchase-money. Only the

Sunday before, a Bishop had delivered a special sermon in the second-class waiting-room at the railway station at Klekótki [the nearest station] before a crowded audience, dishing up all these fables, and denouncing the Count in the strongest terms as Antichrist, who was seducing them with food, fuel and other worldly goods. The Orthodox Church, he said, was strong enough to 'exterminate Antichrist and his works.'

At first a good many of the peasants were really frightened by these sermons; but for the most part they remained indifferent, reasoning that Antichrist would come to destroy and torment men—but that this man saved, pitied and aided them!

Of the series of articles Tolstoy wrote on the famine, some appeared in abbreviated form in Russia, several appeared in the London *Daily Telegraph*, and all were printed, in Russian, at Geneva. In them he mingles an account of the terrible condition of the people, and of what had been done to relieve the distress, with an indictment of the unchristian organisation of society, and an urgent appeal to the rich and powerful to renounce their privileges.

In addition to keeping the people alive by feeding them, it was necessary also to help them on to their feet again. This he attempted to do by supplying them with material to work with during the winter (bast wherewith to plait shoes, for instance) and with seeds and horses to restart farming in the spring. The actual feeding of the destitute presented comparatively little difficulty; but as soon as it came to giving, or even lending, for the improvement of a man's future prospects, the case altered. Supplying horses (costing about £2, 10s. each) necessary as it was—since a peasant cannot till his land without a horse—was particularly troublesome, because such aid was much too great to be given to each family, and therefore envy, recriminations and dissatisfaction were provoked among those who did not receive it. Even in the distribution of seed-corn, the available means were so inadequate to the immense need, that the



difficulty of deciding who was to be helped, and to what extent, seemed insuperable, and the danger that the help given would be misused, rendered the problem yet more difficult. At the end of the work, Tolstoy says, 'we did not feel that we had, in these matters, been of any real use to the peasants.'

His general practice during the famine was as far as possible to ignore the attacks to which he was exposed, and not to complain of the obstacles placed in his way by the priests and officials. Only here and there his opinion of the Government's activity shows itself incidentally, as in his remark that :

There can be none but living help for living men. Such is the law of Nature. To wish to do good without sacrifice, is like wishing to move a body without loss of force. The external activity of Government on behalf of the famine-stricken, is an activity without sacrifice : hence its lack of success and the impossibility of its having success.

He did not idealise the peasants he was serving, and many passages show that he was quite alive to the considerations upon which the Charity Organisation Society insists ; as for instance when he says :

To determine the amount of help needed, we want not lists [such as the *Zémstvov* were compiling] but a prophet who will predict which of the peasants will be alive and well, and will live at peace with his family, and will find work and will work. . . . People who have thought little about the relations between the rich and the poor, generally assume that all that is needed is that the rich should give to the poor, or should be compelled to part with some of their wealth, and then all will be well. But this is a great mistake. . . . How nice and simple it would be to solve things like that ! . . . I myself at one time thought it could be done. . . . But try distributing money to the city poor !—indeed it has been tried, and what came of it ?

Some seven years ago a Moscow merchant left Rs. 6000 to be distributed at Rs.2 per head among the poor, and such a

crowd gathered that two people were crushed to death, and most of the money fell into the hands of strong, healthy fellows, while the weak got nothing.

At a free distribution, the worst passions are aroused and flare up. A crowd of greedy people come to the front, and the agile, strong and unscrupulous get what is distributed. . . .

The Government and the County Councils try to find out who are really in want; but all peasants, even those who are not at all in need, on hearing that something is to be given away for nothing, try to pretend to be in need, or even become so, in order to get help without working. . . . The hope of receiving these free gifts weakens the self-reliance of the masses.

In his *Last Account of Money Contributed from April 12 to July 27, 1892*, written at Begitchevka, Tolstoy mentions that there were in all, under his supervision, 246 eating-houses, in which from 10,000 to 13,000 people were being fed; and besides this, there were 124 kitchens for children, in which 2000 to 3000 were fed.

These figures do not include the relief organised by his sons, in other Provinces.

Besides supplying horses, and seed for oats, potatoes, millet and hemp (which were to be returned in kind after the harvest) bread was baked, and sold at 60 copecks (14 pence) per pood (36 lbs.) and there were many minor claims on the Relief Fund: for help in funerals, payment of debts, support of small schools, and the buying of books, buildings, etc.

Of the peasants' condition towards the end of the famine, Tolstoy writes:

If some one from a city, during the severe cold of winter, came into a peasant-room which had only been slightly heated the day before, and saw the members of the homestead climbing, not down from the top of the stove, but out of the stove itself, in which they spend their days by turns—as this is the only way to get warm—or saw people using the roof of their out-houses for fuel, eating nothing but bread baked half of rye meal and half of the worst kind of bran, and saw grown-up

people disputing and quarrelling because their piece of rye bread is one-eighth of a pound below the agreed weight, or people not leaving their hut because they have nothing to put on—they would be startled. But we regard such things as quite usual. . . . We have become accustomed to suffering, and have ceased to see anything.

His report ends with a touching account of how weary he grew of his work, after two years of it.

‘Fresh peasants always, from morning to night, standing at the door or under the windows, and in the street, with the same phrases: “Have not eaten for two days; have sold our last sheep. What are we to do? We are at the end of our tether. Must we die?”’ Until, ‘ashamed as we are to confess it, we have become so tired of it, that we look on them as enemies.’ He goes on to tell how he wanted to slip out for a walk early one frosty morning, but a tattered, haggard peasant and a fourteen-year-old boy waylaid him, and began the usual story of prolonged distress, and of how they had not eaten for three days.

Tired of hearing always the same words, and feeling that he needed a walk, Tolstoy tried to pass on, saying, ‘Well, well! We’ll come and see!’ But glancing casually at the boy, he saw that:

The boy looked at me with pitiful, but beautiful brown eyes full of tears and hope; and at that moment a bright tear-drop rolled down his nose and fell on the snow-trodden, boarded floor of the vestibule. The lad’s dear, worn face, with his flaxen hair curling in a crown round his head, twitched with suppressed sobs. For me, his father’s words are a trite and customary annoyance; but to him . . . at this solemn moment when, at last, they have made their way to me and to succour, the summing up of the terrible year he has endured with his father unnerves him, weakened as he is by hunger. To me it is all wearisome, wearisome; and I think only of how to get away quickly for my walk.

To me it is old; but to him, terribly new.

Yes, it has wearied us. But they still want to eat, still

desire to live, and still long for happiness and love, as (I see by his charming eyes fixed on me, full of tears) this poor, good lad, tortured by want, and full of naïve self-pity, desires it!

Tolstoy's indictment of society for indifference to the famine, was suppressed in Russia; but the most essential part of it is contained in an *Afterword*, which can be read in *Essays and Letters*.

The objection the Church and State authorities felt to Tolstoy's activity, led, in February 1892, to an incident which nearly cost him his liberty.

He had recently sent an article to the Russian Review, *The Week* (*Nedelya*), and had consented to the omission of anything the Censor would not pass, when Dr. Dillon, the correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph*, applied to him for news of the famine. Tolstoy authorised Dillon to go to the editor of *The Week* and borrow the article for translation. The result was that the *Daily Telegraph* published in full what the Russian paper had only given in a toned-down form; and this gave the reactionaries their wished-for opportunity, and the accumulated bile of Tolstoy's ill-wishers, bureaucratic and ecclesiastical, found vent. The *Moscow Gazette* (one of whose regular contributors and inspirers was Pobedonóstsef) retranslated Tolstoy's article from the English into Russian, and we may be sure did not soften its strenuousness. In editorial articles the paper clamoured for Tolstoy's suppression, and Prince Scherbátov contributed a letter demanding that he should be exterminated. Rumours to the effect that he had already been arrested soon began to circulate.

Some of Tolstoy's family, alarmed for his safety, and seeing that the article as reproduced in the *Moscow Gazette* did not agree with what Tolstoy had written, were inclined to put part of the blame on Dillon, and there was a dispute about it in the press; but I think it was the *Moscow Gazette* that really made the mischief.

So much of Tolstoy's life has been lived in retirement

and detached from politics, that it is only now and then necessary for me to remind readers of the conditions that then prevailed in Russia, and that will prevail as long as one man can grant to whom he pleases absolute power over the property, liberty and lives of others; but, at the point we have reached, Tolstoy was within a short step of the fate that has befallen nearly all Russia's most ardent reformers.

There exists at Souzdal, in the Province of Vladimir, and about one hundred miles to the N.E. of Moscow, an ecclesiastical Bastille, used in the nineteenth and even in the twentieth century for the incarceration of people objectionable to the Russian Orthodox Church. It is a Monastery built on the plan of the old Schlüsselburg fortress, but twice as big. In its damp and dismal dungeons, men were sometimes confined for acts that were not even illegal. Not only were people imprisoned there by Administrative Order, without any trial, 'till they repent and amend,' but cases occurred in which they were so imprisoned in direct defiance of decisions given by the Civil Courts; and it even happened that some of the prisoners were completely forgotten by the Government that imprisoned them. This had occurred in the case of two Old Believer bishops whose release, after twenty-three years of confinement, Tolstoy had obtained through the intermediacy of Prince L. D. Ourousof, several years before the period with which we are now dealing.

The use that has been made of Souzdal Monastery, and the fact that the Archimandrites in charge have rivalled the agents of the secret police in spying on those condemned to live in the Monastery and on those imprisoned in its dungeons, gives point to Belinsky's remark that: 'The Church supports the knout, and toadies to Despotism,' and goes far to justify Herzen's remark that the Orthodox Russian Church is 'an Asiatic Church, always on its knees before worldly power.' The Church—in Russia, even more than in England—has nearly always

sided with the Powers that be, regardless of whether the people were protected or oppressed. For centuries it approved of a system of serfdom that degraded and depraved the masses, and it connived at all the arbitrary caprices of the Tsars: sanctioning by its authority political repression, executions, and arbitrary violence of all kinds. Under the rule of Pobedonóstsef (who was for a quarter of a century practically Dictator of the Russian Church) it had become to all intents and purposes an adjunct of the Police Department, and the liberty of those who were obnoxious to it was in constant danger.

In other lands the press would have been a safeguard for so celebrated, and at that time so popular, a man as Tolstoy. But in Russia the best magazines and papers, besides being in constant danger of suppression, continually received secret Circulars prohibiting any reference to this or that public question, and many such Circulars were issued concerning Tolstoy and the famine. Writers for the Progressive papers were watched by the police and by detectives; nor was speech much freer than the printed word. Students were expelled by hundreds, and sent into banishment at the extreme north of European Russia, or to Siberia, for attending meetings which in England or America would have been perfectly legal; and the Universities, Technical Institutes, and Academies were frequently and arbitrarily closed. Popular and talented Professors were deprived of their Chairs for 'political ill-intentionedness,' or their positions were made so unendurable that they resigned of their own free-will: as for instance occurred a few years later, in the case of Professor Vinográdof, a very moderate man and now Corpus Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford.

'Ill-intentionedness' was suspected in the Zémstvos and Law Courts; their rights and powers were constantly and systematically cut down by legislative enactments, or more frequently, simply by Circulars from the Ministries. All independent activity by educated people was sternly discouraged, and corporal punishment was reintroduced for

the peasant population. Amid such circumstances it was a strange anomaly for such a man as Tolstoy to be left at liberty.

Prougávin, who has made a special study of the attempts to incarcerate Tolstoy, says :

In these dark days, days of ominous social silence, when it seemed as though all that was alive and could protest had been crushed, the solitary but powerful voice of Leo Tolstoy rang out like a bell. . . .

In artistic as well as in publicistic writings, he ardently protested against the oppression and exploitation of the labouring masses by the strong, the ruling, and the rich ; and against violence of all kinds : war, executions, taxes and prisons.

The immediate pretext, to which I have already referred, for an attempt to imprison Tolstoy, is thus referred to by his aunt, the Countess A. A. Tolstoy, Maid of Honour of the Bedchamber, who helped to save her nephew from the danger to which he was exposed. She was writing, let it be noted, years after the event, and very possibly may not be accurate about some of the details :

The worst came about purely from Leo Nikoláyevitch's carelessness, when he allowed an English journalist to get hold—not for publication—of an anti-Governmental article. That son *de la perfide Albion* immediately published it in his paper, with the statement that Leo Nikoláyevitch had allowed him to do so. . . .

Rumours began to reach me that the Minister of the Interior was planning to confine Leo Nikoláyevitch in the Souzdal Monastery without leave to write : that is to say, he would be supplied with a limited amount of paper, and would only be able to get more by returning [used] as much as he had received.

She called on the Minister, and found him apparently in great perplexity.

‘I really do not know what to decide,’ said he. ‘Just read all these denunciations laid against Leo Tolstoy ! The first I received, I put aside ; but I can’t go on concealing this whole affair from the Emperor !’

‘When,’ the lady narrates,

I saw what danger threatened Leo Nikoláyevitch, I decided to use all my influence to save him. I wrote to the Emperor that I was anxious to see him, and asked him to fix a time for me to come. Imagine my delight when I received a reply that he would himself call on me that very day!

I was much excited while awaiting his visit, and silently invoked God’s help. At last the Emperor entered. I noticed that he looked tired, and that he was upset about something. On his asking what I had to say to him, I replied directly:

‘In a day or two a report will be made to you in favour of incarcerating Russia’s greatest genius in a Monastery.’

The Emperor’s face instantly changed, and he became stern and profoundly sad.

‘Tolstoy?’ asked he briefly.

‘You have guessed rightly, Monarch!’ replied I.

‘Then he has designs on my life?’ asked the Emperor.

I was amazed, but secretly encouraged: I thought that *only* that would induce the Emperor to confirm the Minister’s decision.

I recounted to the Emperor all that I had learned from the Minister about Leo’s offence, and I saw, to my great delight, that his face gradually assumed its usual mild and extremely affable expression. Soon he rose to leave. I only allowed myself to say one thing at parting, namely, that it was, of course, not on the Minister that the general indignation—both in Russia and abroad—would fall, in case his recommendation were acted upon.

Two days later I learnt that . . . having listened to the Minister’s report of what had occurred, and of the (alleged) great public excitement, the Emperor, putting aside the Report, replied literally as follows:

‘I request you not to touch Tolstoy. I have no intention of making a martyr of him, and bringing universal indignation upon myself. If he is guilty, so much the worse for him!’

I also learnt that the Minister returned from Gátschino making a show of being, as he expressed it, a ‘perfectly happy man.’ Had his recommendations been confirmed, much reproach would



of course have fallen on him also. He quite understood that, and played the part of 'a happy man' very cleverly.<sup>1</sup>

Tolstoy, born a son of the Orthodox Church, and having by his writings perverted men from that Faith, was actually guilty of a criminal offence. The administrative powers entrusted to the Governor-General of Moscow were more than sufficient to allow of his being disposed of without even the disagreeable formality of a trial; and it is quite possible that, instead of dying in a damp and stinking dungeon, the greatest living writer has been allowed to live in freedom for the last eighteen years, thanks to the fact that he had an aunt at Court. That is how Russia was, and is, governed. There is no fixed law which may not be overridden by the Emperor's will, in spite of a Constitution which he holds in the hollow of his hand.

While these things were going on, the Countess S. A. Tolstoy in Moscow was naturally very anxious about her husband's fate. At first, after the issue of her appeal for contributions, she had been encouraged by important and influential people; but as soon as the rumour spread that Tolstoy's conduct was not well regarded 'in the highest spheres,' she was made to feel that she was in disfavour. Seriously alarmed, she went to see the Grand Duke Sergius, who had just been appointed Governor-General of Moscow, and explained to him how far her husband was from sympathising with Revolution. The Grand Duke replied that the best thing would be for Tolstoy to publish an article in the *Government Messenger* (*Pravítelstvenny Véstnik*) explaining that fact.

<sup>1</sup> I do not think the Countess A. A. Tolstoy makes out her case against Dillon, for Tolstoy must have known that the article was wanted for publication. And another perplexing point remains unsolved. The Minister mentioned by the Countess A. A. Tolstoy is Count D. Tolstoy, Minister of the Interior, who died in 1889; whereas the incident with Dillon and the *Moscow Gazette* occurred early in 1892, and popular report names Pobedonostsef as the Minister who wished to imprison Tolstoy. Perhaps his liberty may have been twice endangered.

Thereupon both the Countess and her eldest daughter wrote to Tolstoy, begging him to sign such a statement as the Grand Duke wanted.

In reply to these requests, which reached him at Begitch-evka, Tolstoy wrote to his wife as follows :

By the tone of your letter I see that I am guilty of something, and must excuse myself to some one.

That tone must not be allowed.

I have, for 12 years past, written what I believe, and what could not please either the Government or the ruling classes—and I write it not casually but deliberately, and not only do I not intend to excuse myself for it, but I hope that those who wish me to do so, will try, if not to justify themselves, at least to cleanse themselves from what not I, but their whole life, accuses them of.

In the present case the following is happening :

The Government arranges a senseless, illegal Censorship, which prevents men's thoughts from being published here in their real shape ; and involuntarily this results in these thoughts being published in a perverted form abroad.

Then the Government becomes agitated, and instead of publicly and honestly looking into the matter, it hides behind the Censor, and at the same time is offended, and takes the liberty of accusing others rather than itself.

What I wrote in the article about the famine, is part of what I have been writing and saying for 12 years, in all sorts of ways, and what I shall continue to say till I die. It is said by all that is enlightened and honest in the whole world, and comes from the heart of every unperverted man, and is affirmed by the Christianity professed by those who are horrified at it.

Observe that, though my writings exist in thousands of copies in various languages, and contain statements of my views, yet from some mysterious articles which appear in an English newspaper, people suddenly discover what sort of a bird I am !

That, surely, is ridiculous !

Only those ignoramuses, of whom the most ignorant are those who form the Court, can help knowing what I write and think.

Only they can suppose that views such as mine can suddenly change one fine morning and become Revolutionary.

It is ridiculous ! And to argue with such people is degrading and offensive.

I fear I shall be accused of pride ; but the accusation will be unjust. Not my pride, but the principles by which I live, refuse to bend to the demands of unchristian people.

I am defending not myself, and am outraged not on my own account, but on account of the principles by which I live.

I write this declaration and sign it, because, as Grot justly remarks, truth should always be expressed when necessary.

Those who tear my portraits, ought never to have had them.

The last sentence was in reply to the news that many people who possessed portraits of him, tore them up as soon as the *Moscow Gazette* began to attack him and it became evident that he was regarded as politically dangerous.

This declaration was sent to the *Government Messenger*, whose editor declined to insert it ; whereupon the Countess sent it to thirty newspapers, some of which ventured to publish it.

After the matter had blown over, Tolstoy wrote to Gay, on 18th June 1892 :

I never before was so occupied as now. I am still at work on the 8th chapter [of *The Kingdom of God is Within You*]. I sit at it for five hours at a time, and spend my whole soul on it, so that nothing remains over. And there is all the current business, and one's connections besides. I think I have finished, but I only think so. Do not blame me for it, dear friend Nikoláy Nikoláyevitch ! You know how important to us are things that seem unimportant to a spectator or reader. The reader has only to answer for himself ; but I must so prepare things that they may be suitable for, and (if I have faith in myself) may act on millions of different individuals. My thoughts have not yet completed their strange, needful, and to me unexpected, work. . . .

In another letter the same month, he says :

I am still writing the same thing. And hard as it is, I can't

tear myself away from it. I hope to finish by September, at any rate. . . . I always want to say the thing more clearly and simply.

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## CHAPTER XIII

### PATRIOTISM

[1892] Répin's picture. *The First Step*. Maupassant's *Françoise*. *Help for the Hungry*. *The Kingdom of God is Within You*. Flogging the peasants. The book's argument, and some comments. International relations. Gladstone versus Tolstoy. Yánzhoul and Factory Inspection. The famine. *On How to Help*. *The Empty Drum*. Henry George. Appearance. Refusals of army-service. 'Get off the people's necks!' 'Zaccheising.' P. A. Sergéyenko. The land for the workers. [1893] At Begitchevka. A. P. I——. Police spies. An Afterword. *The Coffee-House of Surat*. *Walk in the Light*. *Non-Acting*. Koudryávtséf's *Ripe Ears of Corn*. Change in Tolstoy. Talk with Armenian students. Amiel's *Journal*. Maupassant's works. Talk with old peasant. [1894] Death of E. N. Drózhzhin. Christianity versus Patriotism.

RÉPIN's well-known picture of 'Tolstoy ploughing and harrowing' belongs to the year 1887, but five years  
1892 later, by the time our story has reached, Tolstoy—who was then sixty-four years of age—had wellnigh ceased to attempt anything like regular field labour.

Among his literary works of that year is an essay, *The First Step*,<sup>1</sup> which pleads the cause of vegetarianism powerfully on moral and humanitarian grounds. It was written as Preface to a Russian translation of Howard Williams' *Ethics of Diet*, which Tolstoy highly commends.

Another article he wrote was *A Conversation among Leisured People*. The characters in it discuss the desirability of living rightly, but owing to the obligation the

<sup>1</sup> Included in *Essays and Letters*, and also issued as a separate pamphlet by the Vegetarian Society, Manchester.

young are under to the old, and the old to the young, and everybody to somebody else, they all object to any one changing his or her conventional way of life, bad as they admit that way of life to be. One feels that in it Tolstoy is holding up to scorn the arguments which chafed him when used by his family or friends to check his own desire for a radical change of life.

He also, that year, translated Guy de Maupassant's short story, *Notre Dame des Vents*, into Russian, adding some slight touches of his own, and calling it *Françoise*.

Articles on the famine, and articles contributed to famine Miscellanies, complete the list of his writings up to this time.

*The Kingdom of God is Within You* was not completed till 14th May 1893, but the following incident—narrated in its last chapter—refers to 1892.

I was just finishing this two years' work, when on 9 September I had to go by rail to the district in the Governments of Toula and Ryazán where the peasants suffered from famine last year, and are suffering still more this year. My train stopped at a station where it met a special train conveying troops commanded by a Governor, and carrying rifles, cartridges and switches to torture and kill those starving peasants.

Though corporal punishment was abolished in Russia by law thirty years ago, torturing men by beating them with switches to enforce the Government's decisions, has of late become more and more frequent.

I had heard, and even read in the papers, of the awful tortures of which Baránof, Governor of Nízhni-Nóvgorod, is alleged to have boasted, and of those inflicted in Tchernígor, Tambóf, Sarátov, Astrakhán, and Orél—but I had never before had occasion to see the thing actually done. Now, with my own eyes, I saw kind-hearted Russians imbued with the spirit of Christianity, going with rifles and switches to kill and torture their starving brothers.

The cause of their going was this :

On the estate of a wealthy landowner, the peasants had grown a wood on some pasture land which belonged to them and to the landlord in common (by 'grown' I mean that they

took care of it during its growth) and they had always made use of it, and therefore considered it to be their own, or at any rate common property. The landlord, however, appropriated the wood, and began felling it. The peasants lodged a complaint. The Judge, in the first instance, decided wrongly in favour of the landowner. (I say wrongly, on the authority of the Public Prosecutor and of the Governor, who ought to know.) All the higher Courts, including the Senate, though they might have seen that the case had been decided unjustly, confirmed this first decision; and the forest was awarded to the landowner. He went on cutting it down, but the peasants, unable to believe that such an evident wrong could be done them by the highest Authority, did not submit to the decision, but drove away the workmen sent to fell the trees, declaring that the wood was theirs, and that they would carry the matter to the Tsar himself before they would let the trees be cut down.

The affair was reported to Petersburg, whence the Governor received orders to enforce the decision of the Courts. He demanded troops; and now soldiers armed with guns, bayonets, and ball-cartridges, besides a supply of switches specially prepared for the purpose and brought in one of the railway trucks, were going to enforce the decision of the highest Authority.

That decision is enforced by torturing or murdering people (or by threatening to do the one or the other) according to whether there is, or is not, any show of resistance.

In the first case—if the peasants resist—the following takes place both in Russia and wherever a governmental system and property-rights exist. The commanding officer makes a speech demanding obedience. The excited crowd, generally deluded by its leaders, does not at all understand what the officer is saying in his bookish, official language, and continues to be turbulent. Then the officer announces that if they do not submit and disperse, he will be obliged to fire. If the crowd still does not submit and disperse, the officer orders the soldiers to load their rifles and to fire over the people's heads. If they still do not disperse, he orders the soldiers to fire at the crowd. They do so; people fall to the ground wounded or dead, and then the crowd generally breaks up,

and the troops, obeying their commander's orders, seize and take to prison those whom they suppose to be the ringleaders.

After that they pick up the bloodstained, dying, crippled, dead and wounded men, and sometimes also women and children. They bury the dead, and take the crippled to the hospital. Those whom they suppose to be ringleaders, are taken to town and tried by a special Court-Martial; and, if they have committed violence, are sentenced to be hanged. Gallows are erected, and a number of defenceless people are strangled with ropes, as is done and must be done wherever the social system rests on violence. . . .

In the second case—that is, where the peasants submit—something peculiar and specially Russian takes place. The Governor having arrived at the place of action, makes a speech to the people, rebuking them for their disobedience and he either quarters troops on the different houses in the village (where they sometimes stay a month, ruining the peasants for their keep) or, contenting himself with threats, he graciously pardons the people and departs; or—as happens most frequently—he announces that the ringleaders must be punished, and arbitrarily selects without trial a certain number of persons, and has them tortured in his presence.

To give an idea of how these things are done, I will describe a case that occurred in Orél and was approved of by the highest Authorities.

In Orél, as here in Toula, a landowner wanted to take from the peasants what was theirs, and they objected. The case was this: the proprietor wished, without the peasants' consent, to keep the water of his mill-pond at a level which flooded their meadows. The peasants opposed this; and the landlord complained to the Chief of the rural police, who illegally (as was afterwards admitted by the Court) decided the case in the proprietor's favour, and allowed him to keep the water at the high level. He thereupon sent workmen to dam the overflow canal. The peasants revolted against this unjust decision, and sent their women to prevent the workmen doing it. The women went onto the dam, overturned the workmen's carts, and drove them away. The proprietor took



proceedings against the women for thus taking the law into their own hands; and the Chief of Police gave orders to arrest and lock up one woman from every house in the village. This decision was difficult to execute, for there were several women in each household, and as the police did not know which to arrest, they did not execute the order. The proprietor complained to the Governor of the inaction of the police; and the Governor, without looking into the case, gave the local Captain of Police strict orders to carry out his Chief's instructions. Obeying the higher Authority, the Captain came to the village and, with the disregard of human rights characteristic of Russian officials, ordered the policemen to seize 'one woman from every house.' . . . This led to altercations and resistance, in spite of which the Captain ordered his men to seize the first woman they could lay hands on in each house, and to take them to the lock-up. The peasants protected their wives and mothers, would not give them up, and beat the policemen and their Captain. A new and dreadful crime had been committed: 'resistance to Authority,' and this fresh crime was duly reported. Then the Governor, employing telegraphs, telephones and railways (and personifying the 'Genghis Khan with telegraphs' predicted by Herzen) came by special train to the scene of action, bringing a battalion of soldiers with rifles and rods, and a learned physician to see to the hygiene of the flogging.

In front of the District Court House stood these troops, a detachment of police with revolvers suspended by red cords, several peasant officials, and the accused. A crowd of a thousand or more people stood around. Stopping before the Court House, the Governor alighted from his carriage, made a speech he had prepared, and called for the culprits and a bench. These demands were not understood at first; but a policeman who always accompanies the Governor, and who had been employed in arranging the tortures that had more than once been inflicted in that Province, explained that a bench was wanted for the flogging. A bench was brought; switches that had come with the Governor were produced, and the executioners were summoned. These had been selected beforehand from among the horse-thieves

of the village, the soldiers having refused to perform such a duty.

When all was ready, the Chief of Police ordered the first of the twelve men the proprietor had designated as most guilty, to come forward. The man was the father of a family, forty years of age, and honoured by the community whose rights he had bravely maintained. . . . He was led to the bench, his back was bared, and he was ordered to lie down.

He began to beg for mercy, but seeing that this was useless, he made the sign of the cross, and lay down. Two policemen rushed to hold him. The learned doctor stood by, ready to give the necessary scientific, medical help. The horse-thieves spat on their hands, swung their switches, and began to flog. But the bench proved to be too narrow for the writhing victim to be easily held on it; so the Governor ordered another bench to be brought, and a board placed upon them. Men lifting their hands to their caps and saying, 'Yes, Your Excellency!' hurriedly and obediently executed these orders, while the pale, half-naked victim, his jaw and naked legs quivering, waited, with puckered brow, and eyes bent on the ground. When the other bench had been placed in position he was again made to lie down on it, and the convicts again began to flog him. More and more wales and stripes appeared on his back, rump, thighs and even on his sides, and at every blow came muffled sounds the tortured man could not repress. From the crowd standing around, were heard the sobs of the wives, mothers, children and relatives of the sufferer, and of all those who had been selected for punishment.

The wretched Governor, drunk with power, imagining that he could not act otherwise, bent his fingers to count the strokes and incessantly smoked cigarettes, to ignite which officious persons each time eagerly offered him lighted matches. When more than fifty strokes had been given, the peasant ceased to scream and writhe; and the doctor, trained in a Government institution to serve his Monarch and his country by his scientific knowledge, went up to the victim, felt his pulse, listened to his heart, and respectfully informed the

representative of Authority that the man had lost consciousness, and that to continue the punishment might, from a scientific point of view, endanger his life. But the wretched Governor, now quite drunk with the sight of blood, ordered the flogging to continue, and the torture went on till seventy lashes had been given: a number which, for some reason, he considered necessary. After the seventieth lash, the Governor said: 'Enough! Next one!' and the mutilated body with the swollen back was lifted, carried away, and replaced by another victim. The sobs and groans of the crowd grew louder; but the representative of Governmental power continued the torture.

Thus a second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth man was flogged: seventy strokes to each. They all prayed for mercy, and moaned and shrieked. The sobs and groans of the women in the crowd became ever louder and more piercing, and the faces of the peasants more and more dismal. But around them stood the troops, and the torture did not cease until it had been carried out to the very point which the caprice of the unfortunate, half-intoxicated, erring man entitled 'Governor' deemed necessary.

Officials, officers and soldiers were present, and by their presence participated in this affair, and guarded this Governmental act from interruption by the crowd.

When I asked another Governor why such tortures were inflicted on people who had already submitted, and when troops were already in the village, he replied, with the imposing air of one familiar with all the refinements of Statecraft, that it was done because experience proves that if peasants are not subjected to torture, they soon again resist the orders of the Authorities; but that the torture of a few, ensures respect for the orders of the Authorities for ever.

So now the Governor of Toula, accompanied by officials, officers and soldiers, was setting out to perpetrate this same kind of thing. The decision of the highest Authority was to be carried out just in the same way, by murder or torture; and that decision was that a young fellow, a landowner, with a yearly income of Rs. 100,000, was to receive Rs. 3000 more

for a wood he had taken by fraud from a whole Commune of peasants, who were starving and perishing of cold; and he might squander that money in two or three weeks in the restaurants of Moscow, Petersburg, or Paris. That was the business the people I met were engaged on.

After my thoughts had been fixed for two years in one and the same direction, fate as though purposely pushed me, for the first time in my life, into contact with an occurrence which plainly showed in practice what had long been clear to me in theory; namely that the whole order of our lives is based, not on a judicial basis—as people occupying advantageous positions like to imagine—but on the plainest, coarsest violence: on the murder and torture of men. . . .

Oppression, blows, imprisonments and executions may sometimes be inflicted for other purposes than to maintain the privileges of the wealthy classes (though it rarely is so) but one may safely say that in our society—in which for every well-to-do person living like the gentry, there are ten workmen worn-out by labour, envious, greedy, and (with their families) often undergoing real privations—all the privileges of the rich, all their luxury, and all that they have above what an average workman possesses, is obtained and held, only by tortures, imprisonments, and executions.

That is one of the theses Tolstoy has strenuously maintained for the last twenty years, and concerning which he often very considerably overstates his case; but nevertheless, *The Kingdom of God is Within You* is one of his most remarkable works. It deals with the subject of Non-Resistance as applied to Governments, and contains a scathing indictment not of war only, but of violence in all its forms.

The contention of the book is that Governments which employ force: make war, have prisons, maintain penal laws, and rob people (by obliging them to pay rates and taxes), are fundamentally immoral, and exist for the advantage of the rich and powerful, to the detriment of the poor and needy. It further asserts that it is our duty to refuse to

Tolstoy's indictment of the State with such Governments, whether as him when he *sees* masters, policemen, or soldiers. wars, as in itself the Western world, such a thesis, stated

The importance of the State is quite unreasonable. But as Tolstoy by the fact that it is great plausibility, and weighs with not less true as it is, it has led people to the extent of seriously

Wars do so much to the State, and the State is not used owing to Tolstoy's influence.

custom-houses = a point of view, or show its plausibility could always be shown by recounting an occurrence to which he

jealousies eliminated the community wished to migrate to Siberia.

Africa might have been a sanction, and impatient of bureau- and colonial power, eventually resolved to go without per- plete confidence in the up their belongings, and set off. In

of war—such as the ignorance of geography or because compose a nation of migrants, they failed to find suitable common man. and wandered further and further, till

armaments during the war's land beyond the Russian frontier, excessive in proportion to these officials. Here they settled, free a matter of size to conscription, with no drink-shop

treading leads to (er) and no tithes to pay. The soil Then again, some fifteen years of hard work, the

*Europe's Optimum* had become prosperous. war, now that the Government official lost his way, and

has become so much a community. The necessary scientific conqueror as r soon followed; the district became

given a moral essence of civilisation poured in upon must ultimately, and arrears of taxes; their young but which is s for that year and for the preceding

only by attacking it Tolstoy calls it drew a revenue from the vodka sold escape from the collected tithes and levied contribu- offers us. his family's maintenance, and in a few

What particular was again desperately poor. emancipation Tolstoy illustrates Tolstoy's view of Govern- is rapidly spreading mixed evil; but it conceals a sophistry; like the Rothschild the Village Community of that kind carried

with it its own Government: namely its Elder and his assistants, who do not scruple to use physical force to maintain order, if necessary. It is true that in a very primitive peasant Community, with a traditional routine of life and a customary method of communal agriculture, their laws and customs are so engrained that they need a *minimum* of Government. They are just the people to gain least and suffer most from coming under the control of the bureaucracy. But it would be rash to assume that, in the absence of any central Government, the various races that compose the Empire would all live in peace and harmony; and the more it happens that men of different creeds and customs come into touch with one another, the more necessary is a definite external law, to enable them to co-operate without being tempted to settle their differences by violence.

In writing for Western readers there is, however, no need to dwell on the weak side of Tolstoy's position. It is more to the point to emphasise its plausibility, and to show that it should not be brushed aside without consideration. Let me, therefore, mention another side of the case, and, this time, one not specially Russian.

We are often told that Governments exist primarily to protect life and property; but the plain fact is that all the burglars in Europe do not steal as much property in ten years as any civilised and Christian Government seizes and destroys in a single month of one of the wars it periodically and unblushingly wages. And all the murderers in the world do not kill nearly as many people in a whole generation, as the Government of any one of the most enlightened and Christian countries kills in a single week's hostilities.

We may disagree with Tolstoy's conclusion that Governments do nothing but harm; but if Governments are to exist, they must at least learn to behave themselves better than they have done in the past.

The strongest and most impressive part of the book is its scathing denunciation of war. So overwhelming is

Tolstoy's indictment that he almost carries the reader with him when he goes on to denounce patriotism, the cause of wars, as in itself a degraded superstition and a vice.

The importance of Tolstoy's pronouncement is increased by the fact that what he has put as a matter of morals, is not less true as a matter of business.

Wars do sometimes result in the consolidation of a State, and the abolition of needless frontiers and superfluous custom-houses; but the thing to notice is that these results could always be better reached without a war, were national jealousies eliminated. For instance, the unification of South Africa might have come about long ago if only our foreign and colonial policy had always inspired—not fear, but—complete confidence among our neighbours. Moreover, the gains of war—such as they are—seldom reach the individuals who compose a nation, and seldome of all do they reach the common man. And again, the growth of expenditure on armaments during the last decade has increased at a rate so excessive in proportion to the growth of our wealth, that it is a matter of simple arithmetic to show that the road we are treading leads straight towards international bankruptcy. Then again, as is well shown in Norman Angel's book, *Europe's Optical Illusion*, the dislocation of business by war, now that trade depends largely on credit, and capital has become so international, will be a calamity involving conqueror as well as conquered. Tolstoy therefore has given a moral and emotional impetus to a movement which must ultimately prevail if our civilisation is to endure, but which is opposed by superstitions so engrained that only by attaining to a fresh outlook on life—or, as Tolstoy calls it, a fresh 'religious perception'—can men escape from them; and that fresh perception Tolstoy offers us.

What particularly deserves to be pointed out is that the emancipation Tolstoy advocates from patriotic superstitions, is rapidly spreading among far-sighted business men, who, like the Rothschilds, may have offices in London, Paris and

Vienna, and transfer business from one centre to another, according to the chances of war; or, like the Beits, Albus, Wertheimers, Goetzes, etc., of South Africa, may find it better to exploit other people's patriotism than to carry any large stock of their own. In fact, many intelligent men—whether from the highest religious, or the most practical business, motives—are rapidly discarding feelings of enmity to foreigners, which formerly seemed to be among the most ineradicable instincts of mankind—except among kings and queens and people of royal blood, who have, all through history, shown a remarkable facility in acquiring patriotic feelings for any country that offered them a throne or a place near a throne—and are beginning to try to see things as they really are, and not through the coloured glasses of patriotic jealousy. An egregious personal or family vanity is even now a recognised sign of mental and moral inferiority; and a strong patriotic bias may soon come to be recognised as a similar taint.

For the present, men's minds are in a strange state of confusion concerning these questions of patriotism and war. We have two strongly opposed currents of sentiment—both of which make men appear wilfully blind to certain urgent and obvious considerations. On the one side we have the patriotic politicians, many of whom recognise that those who possess intelligence and power are bound to look ahead and manage affairs so as to avoid calamities which would inevitably ensue, were matters allowed to drift. Such men know that to make an omelette you must break some eggs, and they would rather sink a few pirate ships than let the Pacific Ocean become unsafe for commerce, and would rather shoot a few highwaymen than allow traffic to be held up on our main roads.

The weakness of their position is that the means they rely on, namely the increase of their nation's power, involves constant danger of collision with its neighbours, and diverts attention from the really urgent work of making their own country worth defending, to the unproductive



task of safeguarding it against invasions that seldom occur.

On the other side we have the peace-at-any-price people, who see how foolish and wicked it is that hundreds of millions of peaceful, civilised and Christian men should be taxed heavily every year and subjected to conscription, and should periodically slaughter each other by tens of thousands, merely to protect themselves from one another! For it is undoubtedly true that the enormous majority of Englishmen, Germans, Austrians, Italians and Americans would not submit to their military burdens, unless they believed them to be indispensable precautions against invasion by other people—who really feel just as they do about the matter, and also only want to be safe.

The weakness of the peace-at-any-price position is that it is a negative policy, and does not show us how the work of organising the world is to be done.

The military forces of the Great Powers are like the rash upon a scarlet-fever patient. It does no good to try and get rid of the rash, as long as the fever of patriotic jealousy and distrust is there; and what all men of good will really ought to concentrate upon is, not that their Governments should disarm *before* adopting a sane and moral foreign policy, but to insist that their Governments should *at once* begin to act upon, and publicly profess, an absolutely fair, honourable and disinterested course. We want a Government not jealous about small advantages, and not content merely to be fair, but that aims always at being, like Cæsar's wife, above suspicion.

If a country could be induced to act towards all others, great or small, as Lincoln acted towards the Confederate States, its dangers would be immensely diminished, and the way would be prepared for a decrease of armaments to come about of itself. He disliked war and tried to avoid it. When it broke out despite his efforts, he took it seriously and fought it through: seeking from first to last no unfair advantage, offering always generous

terms of peace, and eventually treating the conquered foe magnanimously.

Of the condition of foreign affairs that still obtains in the civilised world, Gladstone well said :

A nation is rarely just to other nations. Perhaps it is never truly just, though sometimes (like individuals) what may be called more than just. There can be no difficulty in any country . . . in finding foreign ministers able and willing to assert the fair and reasonable claims of their countrymen with courage and with firmness. The difficulty is of quite another kind. It is to find the foreign minister : first, who will himself view those claims in the dry light both of reason and of prudence ; secondly, and a far harder task, who will have the courage to hazard, and if need be to sacrifice himself, in keeping the mind of his countrymen down to such claims as are strictly fair and reasonable.

He added, with much truth, that ‘The grand characteristic of suspicion after all, as of superstition, is to see things that are not.’

The thing to be desired has been well put by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, who said :

I confess that I dream of the day when an English statesman shall arise with a heart too large for England, having courage in the face of his countrymen to assert of some suggested policy : ‘This is good for your trade ; this is necessary for your domination ; but it will vex a people hard by ; it will hurt a people farther off : it will profit nothing to the general humanity ; therefore, away with it ! It is not for you or for me.’ When a British Minister dares speak so, and when a British public applauds him speaking, then shall the nation be glorious, and her praise, instead of exploding from within, from loud civic mouths, come to her from without, as all worthy praise must—from the alliances she has fostered, and the peoples she has saved.

The prestige that would be gained by a nation that was not merely scrupulously honest, but aimed at being really

impartial and disinterested, would go far towards rendering it invulnerable: especially now that news spreads so rapidly, public opinion counts for so much, and nations at war depend so greatly on their ability to raise loans; for an improvement in international relations is so necessary, that the nation which will act nobly in this matter, will render an inestimable benefit to humanity. Personally, I would much rather that our own Empire should crumble into dust, than that it should impede the progress upon which the welfare of the world depends. Pleading the case on the lowest ground, I believe that honesty in foreign affairs is by far the best policy; and perhaps I can best suggest the kind of advantage that would accrue from such a policy by taking an instance of the opposite from recent history.

The Jameson Raid and other preliminaries to the Boer war, as well as that war itself, and the 'methods of barbarism' by which it was brought to a close (including as they did the burning of farmhouses, the destruction of dams necessary for irrigation, and the herding of women and children in Concentration Camps where they died like flies) were disapproved of and disliked by some Englishmen, and by nearly all foreigners. But how did these things react on the safety of the British Empire?

We guarantee the independence of Holland. The mass of the Dutch people used to respect and like England, regarding it as a land of democratic freedom, and the birthplace of Constitutional Government. I am told by one who knows Holland well, that the Boer war and the Concentration Camps changed all that. England became extremely unpopular with the Dutch, and had Germany then proceeded to incorporate Holland and to take Amsterdam and Rotterdam, it is doubtful whether the Dutch would have endured the landing of British forces for their protection, and we certainly could not have protected them against their will. (This may now have been again modified by the grant of self-government to South Africa. If so, that reinforces my contention that just and fair dealing

is the safest national policy.) The revulsion of Dutch feeling against us certainly endangered us more than the successful war strengthened us; and after doubling our expenditure on army and navy, we are even now less safe than we were before we refused to arbitrate our claim to possess suzerain rights over the internal affairs of the Transvaal, and thereby did much towards alienating the sympathy of the freedom-loving democracies of Europe.

During the Boer war, I was amazed to meet people who assumed that every one had to be pro-British or pro-Boer: that is to say, to desire most of all, not that right should prevail and their nation be freed from all suspicion of sharp practice, but that this or that set of combatants should come out top. 'My nation, right or wrong!' was a motto they understood; but 'Let justice be done, though the heavens fall!' was one that had for them no appeal.

Tolstoy has stated the case against patriotism and war most powerfully; and it was most important to have this well done, in order to have some literary counterpoise to the patriotic influence exerted by the classics and the Old Testament—books written when people did not know other nations, but sincerely hated them, and when the foreigner was a natural enemy, and men believed that their national God abhorred the 'Gentiles,' and desired to see the Hivites and the Amorites smitten hip and thigh.

We have inherited from those olden times the habit of making a quite irrational distinction between people governed by our own, and those governed by some other, ruler; though in modern conglomerate empires the difference is no longer one of race or creed.

Gradually, however, we are coming to know the foreigner better, to find how like he is to ourselves, and to be proud of sharing his art and science. Trade, industry, capital and even labour are becoming international. We travel more among foreigners, learn their languages better, and sometimes even intermarry with them; and so the patriotic superstition which causes all races (and especially the most

objections? then the existence of Governments, and democratic Governments in particular, may well be defended.

Twenty-five years before Tolstoy formulated his indictment, Gladstone had written :

Decision by majorities is as much an expedient as lighting by gas. In adopting it as a rule, we are not realising perfection, but bowing to an imperfection. It has the great merit of avoiding, and that by a test perfectly definite, the last resort to violence ; and of making force itself the servant instead of the master of authority.

To which these words of Burke may well be added :

‘I am aware that the age is not what we all wish, but I am sure that the only means to check its degeneracy is heartily to concur in whatever is best in our time.’

His attitude towards civil Government naturally led Tolstoy to regard legislative measures of social reform with indifference. Yánzhoul says that, in the 'eighties, Tolstoy's attitude towards Factory Inspection—then just introduced in Russia<sup>1</sup>—was sympathetic, and he was highly indignant when he heard of the insanitary abominations discovered at a certain sulphur-match factory. In the 'nineties, however, and more and more as the years went by, he became dogmatic in his non-Government attitude, and correspondingly cold and unresponsive about labour laws. To preserve the workers from excessive exploitation, to insist that their wages should be paid regularly and in money, and to organise factory *crèches* and lying-in hospitals, are things that no longer move him. Having found a panacea for human ills, he rejects palliatives ; but the pity of it is, that when it comes to getting the work of the world done, his panacea refuses to act.

Madame E. N. Yánzhoul, the wife of the writer referred to, tells of a talk she had with Tolstoy. She was recounting her experience in the first *crèches* which were being started

<sup>1</sup> Yánzhoul, Professor and Academician, who was himself the first Factory Inspector in the Moscow district. He was appointed in 1882.

at that time in Moscow, when she was dumbfounded to hear Tolstoy say :

‘How can you take part in such things? Why, it is worse than a robber’s den ! . . . You take children from their own mothers. The mother ought to attend to her own child, but you collect the babies in a heap and put some hireling to look after them, and think you are doing good ! . . .’

‘But really, Leo Nikoláyevitch, we only take poor children whose mothers are at work, generally in factories or workshops !’

‘That is all very well, but you merely support and perpetuate an existing evil. It is unnatural that mothers should not be able to feed and tend their own babies, and you, with your establishments, keep that state of things going. If there were fewer of these *crèches* and similar worthless establishments, we should perhaps come to our senses sooner, and organise our lives better. . . .’

‘But allow me, Leo Nikoláyevitch, to ask you a question ! If you went for a walk, and saw a swaddled baby in the street in danger of being run over, or frozen to death, what would you do ?’

‘Of course, I should pick it up !’

‘And then, what ?’

‘I should take it somewhere.’

‘Well, bring it to our *crèche* ! We do not undertake to solve social problems. We only want to save children who might otherwise perish ; and to make it possible for the mothers, who are at work all day, to leave their children there—not in the care of some untrained girl or half-blind or half-deaf old woman, —but in a room where they will be well looked after, under healthy conditions.’

‘That ended our talk,’ says Mme. Yánzhoul, ‘which goes to disprove the accusation often brought against Tolstoy, that he cannot endure contradiction.’

*The Kingdom of God is Within You* was of course not allowed in Russia, but it circulated and was eagerly read nevertheless. And by a strange caprice of Fate, the exposure it contained of the flogging of the peasants by a

Governor—though written by one who had himself narrowly escaped imprisonment a short time before—resulted in that Governor's dismissal from his post!

Tolstoy's active participation in the famine, together with his popularity as a writer and the abundant evidence of his disinterestedness and courage, had made him by this time the most conspicuous and influential unofficial person in Russia. His relations with the political reformers, however, were then, as they still are, strangely dual. He cordially sympathised with their protest against oppression, and was on their side when they were ill-treated; but the moment they approached to power, or began to prepare for anything like a Constitution, he simply turned his back upon them. The result was that their feelings towards him swung like a pendulum. Sometimes they were keenly sympathetic; at other times they regarded him as a broken reed, and poured fierce scorn on all his works.

Prince D. N. Shahovskóy (in an article written when he was in prison for signing the Vyborg Protest against the dissolution of the First Doúma) recalls Tolstoy's relations with the Progressives, and recounts how, when the second year's famine came on (in 1892) the press was not allowed to publish appeals for help, and such references as were permitted, failed to evoke the aid urgently needed. A private meeting was therefore convened in Moscow, in the apartment of I. I. Petrunkévitch, to hear a report by K. K. Arsényef, who had just returned from visiting the famine district of Toúla. Among those present were: P. N. Milukóf (the present Leader of the Constitutional Democrats) Professor Grot, and Tolstoy. In the course of the discussion that took place, the last-named gave it as his opinion that 'Russian writers have a traditional method of rendering assistance in such cases by the publication of a *Miscellany* to raise funds for the cause; and that is the only thing we can now do.'

Such a publication was, in fact, agreed upon and successfully carried out.

The general impression at that gathering was 'that the obstacles placed by Government in the path of all efforts to meet a great national disaster, are intolerable; and that it is necessary at all costs systematically to organise the social forces,' with a view to obtaining greater freedom. That meeting was the forerunner of the Congresses held during the 'nineties by those actively engaged in Local Government work; and these in turn prepared the way for such measures of Constitutional reform as Russia has since obtained. Tolstoy neither aimed at, nor approves of, a Constitution; yet beyond doubt his indictment of unbridled Autocracy, powerfully contributed to the change that has already come about, and to the further changes that are yet to come.

To the *Miscellany* above referred to and published by the *Russian Gazette* (*Rousskiya Vedomosti*) Tolstoy contributed an article *On How to Help Those Suffering from the Famine*. He had no work of fiction ready, but allowed his folk-story, *The Empty Drum*,<sup>1</sup> which up to that time had not been allowed to appear in Russia, to be modified sufficiently to induce the Committee of Censors to pass it; a matter fortunately accomplished by merely altering the word 'Tsar' in the story, to 'Chieftain.' This exquisite little story is one after Tolstoy's own heart. It was current from time immemorial among the peasants of the Vólga district, and its appearance among Tolstoy's works is an instance of the extent to which he is the mouthpiece of the thoughts and feelings of the Russian people.

Tolstoy called one evening at the house of D. Anóúchin, who had the publication of this *Miscellany* in hand. The maid who opened the door was displeased that a man in a sheepskin overcoat and felt boots should have the impudence to come to the front door, and she administered a suitable reproof. The visitor, learning that Anóúchin was not at home, remarked: 'Tell him Count Tolstoy called.' The maid received the message sceptically, and

<sup>1</sup> See *Twenty-three Tales* by Tolstoy.



reported it ironically; but was much taken aback to learn that the man she had treated so brusquely was not merely a Count, but by far the most famous of all Counts.

As an instance of the length to which Tolstoy carried his theory of Non-Resistance, Anoútchin mentions that he once asked him: 'May I kill a wolf that attacks me?' and Tolstoy replied: 'No, you must not; for if we may kill a wolf, we may also kill a dog, and a man, and there will be no limit! Such cases are quite exceptional; and if we once admit that we may kill, and may resist evil,—evil and falsehood will reign in the whole world unchecked, as we see is now the case.'

Here, once more, it is very obvious that Tolstoy was substituting an external criterion—the fact of slaying—for any more subtle criterion. He was, no doubt, trying to demagnetise the watch, and to counteract the evil doctrine of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; but he was, I think, hardly adopting a method likely to succeed.

In reply to the editor's request for a contribution to an Album of Autographs issued in aid of the Famine Fund, he sent the following characteristic note:

I do not know how to fulfil your wish. Frenchmen have an advantage over us in that respect, for they know how to do such things, and are not ashamed of them. But I confess I feel so ashamed that I cannot master the feeling. Who can have any need of a bit of my writing? For heaven's sake do not imagine that I say what I do not think and feel! I cannot, and never could, either read in public or write in albums. Please excuse me, and do not be angry, and believe in my sincere respect.

For another *Miscellany* issued for the same object, he edited a translation of an article by Henry George. Inconsistent as it may seem with his no-Government beliefs, he had by this time become an ardent adherent of that writer's views on land-taxation. George's *Social Problems* and *Progress and Poverty*, with their deep feeling, lucid

statement, broad outlook, indignation at existing inequalities, and absence of practical administrative detail, were books just calculated to secure his warm sympathy.

A glimpse of Tolstoy at the beginning of the winter of 1892-3 is given us by Semyónof, who mentions that he had altered considerably during the preceding couple of years. His beard had become quite grey, and his hair was thinner. He seemed smaller, but his deep-set eyes still seemed to pierce one's soul. He was then feeling hopeful of the spread of a good spirit among people, and he mentioned with great approval a priest, Apóllóf, who having become convinced that the dogmas of the Church have no sound basis, had resigned his living though he lacked any other means of subsistence. Tolstoy also spoke very warmly of the school-teacher Drózhzhin, who for conscience' sake had refused army-service. It was the first instance of such conduct that had come under his personal notice, and he attached great importance to it.

Of the Pan-Russian Religious Festival that was then attracting much attention, Tolstoy spoke with amazement, being surprised that the authorities could make such a fuss about nothing; for he had looked up the life of the new Saint (Serafím) and had found him to be a most ordinary monk.

At the same interview, Tolstoy dropped a characteristically sarcastic reference to his old friend Fet, remarking that: 'Fet says he wants nothing, and his demands are very modest. Give him a soft bed, a well-cooked steak, a bottle of good wine, and a couple of good horses—and he wants no more! . . .' He went on to express sympathy with the famine-stricken peasants, and irritation against the Government and the upper classes. His face showed indignation when he told how in his Province of Tóula, and in Ryazán, many peasants wished to migrate to Siberia; but because the landowners wanted to retain a supply of cheap labour, 'a Circular from the Minister of the Interior appeared, temporarily forbidding migration!'

While denouncing the officials, he did not spare private individuals engaged in public work. He said :

I had Count Bóbrinsky sitting here and saying that what is needed to save the people is that Church schools should be started everywhere. Others are saying that science will save the people from hunger when knowledge develops and nourishment is obtained chemically. That is all nonsense, and not at all what is needed. The evil is not that there is too little corn grown. Crops have failed in some places, but in adjacent localities the granaries are full : only they are locked up, while corn to feed the starving has to be brought from thousands of miles away. And no one is indignant at such things ; every one regards them as natural. The upper classes are to blame : they have set the example, and they have perverted the people ; and the people feel this. During the cholera riots, peasants attacked the doctors—and every one was indignant and horrified at the ignorance and stupid cruelty of the peasants ; yet it was but a natural explosion of anger against the classes who have turned the peasants' lives upside down ; only unfortunately it spent itself on some unhappy doctors who chanced to be within reach. It was not a proof of peasant stupidity, but of their consciousness that as a result of insensate interference, their lives have become intolerable.

‘But one must somehow bring the people out of their abnormal condition,’ said one of the guests.

‘Nothing of the sort,’ replied Tolstoy ; ‘one must simply get further away from them, and get off their backs. When you have done that, they will recover and find their own road, and follow it.’

Tolstoy, however, welcomed efforts to assist the people temporarily, and to give them something at once. Every rouble contributed gladdened him ; and he remarked that there was an awakening of conscience in society, and that people were opening their purses and contributing their mites. This, he called *Zaccheising* [after Zaccheus who gave away half his property when Christ visited him] and he recounted with emotion how one person had brought

him an old fur-coat, and another some jewelry. Yet, alternating with this feeling and growing stronger as time went on, was the other feeling to which I have referred; and on 3rd May 1893 he notes in his Diary: 'Was at Begitchevka. Felt indifference to the empty business of relief, and repulsion at the hypocrisy.'

It was during the preceding winter that he first made the acquaintance of P. A. Sergéyenko, who has since written so many books and articles about him. Sergéyenko tells us that on the occasion of their first meeting, at the tea-table of a mutual friend, the conversation turned on one of the young Tolstoys, who was then looking out for an estate. Some one present said:

'Leo Nikolájevitch, tell your son, when he finds a suitable estate, to come to me for advice before concluding the bargain—or he may do something stupid.'

Tolstoy shrugged his shoulders, and said: 'Why hinder him? The more stupidities he commits, the better for him.'

Sergéyenko did not understand this, and asked:

'Why will it be better for him?'

'Because the sooner his teeth are set on edge with estates, and he finally convinces himself by personal experience that nothing good can come of them, the sooner will he understand that only those should possess land who work it themselves.'

Towards the end of January 1893, Semyónof took charge of the relief work at Begitchevka, and remained till the winter frost broke up. Tolstoy himself, after a 1893 three weeks' visit to Moscow, returned to Begitchevka with his two eldest daughters, and there wrote the last pages of *The Kingdom of God is Within You*.

Among other workers at that place were P. I. Birukóf and A. P. I—. The latter was a short, elderly man much the worse for wear, with a thin, pointed beard, and a thick purple nose. He had once been an officer,

but had taken to drink, lost caste, and dropped into the 'golden regiment.' Towards the end of the 'seventies he had come to Yásnaya as a beggar. Up to that time the Countess S. A. Tolstoy had always copied out her husband's writings; but she so disliked his attacks on the Church in *A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology*, that she declined to copy it. A. P. I—— happened to have a good handwriting, and Tolstoy took him into his house and employed him as an amanuensis. When A. P. I—— had earned a little money, he would buy himself clothes, and go off; but after wandering about for a while, he would again take to drink, pawn all he had, and return to Tolstoy. This happened several times, and on one occasion Tolstoy found him in Rzhánof House in great misery. It was, in fact, he who narrated to Tolstoy the episode of the washerwoman whose death has been mentioned in a former chapter, and it was also he who rescued the fragments of *Church and State* from Tolstoy's wastepaper basket. At Begítchevka, A. P. I—— was engaged in copying out *The Kingdom of God is Within You*.

I knew him years later. He was a man with many good qualities, and gave me much information about Tolstoy—for whom he felt both sympathy and respect.

One gathers from Semyónof that, even in the famine district, Non-Resistance principles did not work quite smoothly, despite Tolstoy's potent personal influence; for we read of the wood-carters being dishonest, and of some one explaining that:

'People tell them that with you, Tolstoyans, they can do what they like: you won't defend yourselves, and won't employ the law against them.'

Yet, on the whole, Tolstoy's influence seems to have been strong enough to keep the work going with a considerable measure of success.

In spite of all efforts, however, distress and destitution increased day by day; and those who were at work amid it all, felt it strange to see the idle, genteel life of the neighbouring gentry, who, in their fine comfortable houses,

surrounded by the broad acres of their private estates, lived on in their accustomed way, hunting and visiting, and having dinners, music and dances, and displaying not merely indifference to the increasing destitution of thousands of peasants, but even enmity towards them.

To show how little ground the Government had for suspecting Tolstoy of political conspiracy, it may be mentioned that when two young men and some women, Social Democrats, came to Begítchevka offering help, but admitting that political propaganda was their chief aim—Tolstoy refused to allow them to remain.

The help given by his group was quite free from any tendency. None of them did any preaching or propaganda. To make the distress of the peasants publicly known and to render relief, was their only care.

They were, all the time, exposed to police supervision and espionage, but they easily detected the spies who appeared upon the scene, and avoided all the traps that were set.

As the months went on and conditions became worse, the horses began to starve to death, typhus spread, and the death-rate in the villages rose terribly.

Throughout this long and dreary time, no fear of personal danger caused either Tolstoy or his children to refrain from the work, nor did the grey monotony of the misery exhaust their patience, and this in spite of the fact that he gravely questioned whether it was 'the right thing.'

The year 1893 at last brought a better harvest. The famine ended; and with its close we enter a fresh phase of Tolstoy's life. The preceding fifteen years were a time of great struggle and change in his life and outlook; from now onwards no radical alteration occurred, and his life ran pretty steadily in its groove. There is therefore no need for me to dwell at great length on his later and more tranquil years, and there is good reason to shorten my tale. Tolstoy himself has lived so completely in the open that one may speak of him quite frankly and fully, but the story of the Tolstoy movement is a more delicate matter,

and though I propose to be frank when I deal with it, I had better also be brief.

Beyond completing *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, he did not write much in 1893. An *Afterword* (already mentioned) to his Famine Report was published in Geneva, and his translation, or rather adaptation, of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *The Coffee-House of Surat* (included in *Twenty-three Tales*) was also written this year, unless perhaps it was prepared before he went off to the famine district in 1891. *Walk in the Light While There Is Light*, begun in 1887, was published in 1893. Some pages of it were written by Vladímir Tchertkóf, who persuaded Tolstoy to patch together this unfinished and inartistic sketch—much the weakest story he ever wrote. It appeared in a Miscellany called *The Road*, published for the benefit of needy emigrants to Siberia.

On 9th August Tolstoy finished a very interesting essay, entitled *Non-Acting*, of which he wrote to Gay :

I have finished my book, and now throw myself from one thing to another: I have not finished my article on Art, but have written one on Zola's and Dumas' letters on the mental conditions of to-day. Zola's stupidity, and the prophetic, artistic, poetic voice of Dumas, interested me very much.

This essay appeared in Russian, and (as often happened with Tolstoy's later works) was badly translated into French. He generally disregards such occurrences, but on this occasion, feeling specially anxious that his ideas should reach French readers in an intelligible form, he rewrote the article himself in French, rearranging it at the same time. Excepting letters to correspondents, this was, I believe, the only work Tolstoy ever wrote in French—all the rest having been in Russian.

The article is an earnest plea to men of good will to 'stop and think' of the meaning of life and of the work they undertake, before allowing themselves to become immersed in often useless or even harmful affairs, that absorb them to the exclusion of all opportunity for calm reflection.

The article on Art mentioned in the foregoing letter was a preliminary sketch—commenced in 1890 and frequently resumed and re-shaped—of the work which ultimately grew into a whole book, *What is Art?* The sketch was entitled, *What is and what is not Art, and when is Art important and unimportant?*, and did not appear till 1900, when it was called *Art and Not-Art*, and was mistaken by some critics for a supplement to and modification of Tolstoy's main pronouncement on Art.

A remarkable Collection of Thoughts and Aphorisms from Tolstoy's private letters, compiled with much sympathetic judgment by D. R. Koudryávtséf, appeared in 1893, under the title of *Ripe Ears of Corn*. It was printed in Geneva, and contained Tolstoy's articles on the famine unabridged.

I have already referred to some of the changes in Tolstoy's moods and manners that resulted from the changes in his religious outlook, but one point remains to be mentioned. When young and comparatively unrecognised, he had a tendency, as we have seen, to be arrogant and quarrelsome; but now in later life, when he had become the most famous man in Russia, he impressed many observers by his modesty and great consideration for other people's feelings. Nor was this altogether the result of his Christianity. It resulted largely from his having found his feet and become sure of himself. A certain kind of arrogance is allied to painful self-consciousness and self-dissatisfaction, such as he often experienced in early life. If traces of his old arrogance were at times discernible even late in life, this was generally in relation to those people and classes of people: rulers, politicians, scientists, commercial men and manufacturers, with whom he has been but little in personal touch. To those whom he knew, he was generally considerate and kind.

Nothing very remarkable happened during 1893; but I will quote an account of a conversation he had with some Russian-Armenian students who called on him and told him



of the oppression of their countrymen in Turkey, and mentioned the idea that their only hope lay in Revolution.

‘Come now,’ said Tolstoy, ‘is their condition really so hopeless? Don’t people exaggerate? Even granting that it is all true, still no doubt some Armenians share in the oppression. What I mean is, that the more influential and wealthy of them squeeze their own people not less than the Turks or the Kurds do . . . the question is not one of nationality! You say that Raffi and other writers see no escape for the Turkish Armenians but by an insurrection? But what will come of it? Will the condition of the people be improved? Take a striking example—Bulgaria. A friend of mine, who knows, tells me that under Turkey, Bulgaria was better off than now after its emancipation. At any rate the common people lived better. That is a fact well worth considering. . . . And do not forget that the Bulgarian insurrection only succeeded by a pure accident. The result might easily have been quite different, as has often happened elsewhere.’

‘But,’ asked one of the visitors, ‘what about Greece? Her position improved after she threw off the Turkish yoke, and obtained an independent Government.’

‘Not only Greece, but Italy also, is worse off now than before,’ retorted Tolstoy. ‘Take Italy, for instance. You have there a very real decadence. The condition of the people is terrible. Emancipation, and the mere obtaining of political independence, amounts to nothing. They do not make the people happy, and do not free them from oppression and exploitation. If the Turkish Armenians were liberated to-morrow, some other Government would oppress the poor and the weak, just the same; and whether it is an Armenian, Russian or French Government, really does not matter.’

‘It may interest you, Leo Nikoláyevitch,’ said one of the company, ‘to know that among the Armenians another movement now exists, not content with merely political aims but taking up an economic ground, and having primarily in view the interests of the labouring classes, on the lines of Social Democracy. . . .’

‘Oh, don’t talk about it,’ said Tolstoy ironically, frowning slightly: ‘I can’t speak of it without laughing!’

'But,' replied the other, 'the basic idea of Socialism cannot, I imagine, be altogether repugnant to you. On the ground of the brotherhood and equality of man. . . .'

'But, allow me . . . ! Where, in a Social-Democratic State, does equality come in? How can it be got? The wealth now held by the minority will have to be administered by some one, who will, of course, be an ordinary human being with certain weaknesses and defects. They aren't going to invite the angels to come and attend to the distribution of wealth, are they? Well, once it has to be done by certain people—let us say by the most eminent—*they* will rule us. Equality will again not be obtained. . . . No! that is not what we have to think about, nor should we call on the Turkish Armenians to rebel,' continued Tolstoy, becoming more and more animated and evidently anxious to convince us of the justice of his argument: 'one must preach to them and to their oppressors humane and pure Christian ideas. Only *that* can lighten and improve the condition of the people. And please don't be frightened at the word "Christianity." I mean nothing mystical, but simply the love of man by man: their brotherly, cordial relations. If all the energy of the patriots who preach the struggle for emancipation, were directed into that path, it would, in my opinion, be far better and more useful. I will go even further, and say that it is essential to follow that course.'

'But,' some one replied, 'such humanitarian teaching is only possible under normal conditions of life, and among more or less civilised people. Among barbarians such as the Kurds. . . .'

'Allow me . . . !' interrupted Tolstoy again. 'Is not a Kurd a man like you and me? And have we any right to kill him? Why do you suppose he will not understand this Christian appeal, and will not value it? Believe me, he will understand it a great deal better than some bureaucrat or other—say, for instance, our Chief of Police, Vlasóvsky! Personally I would sooner undertake to preach compassion to a Kurd than to Vlasóvsky. I repeat that Armenian patriotism, like every other, is paganism, against which all thinking people must struggle!'

After some time the conversation passed to other topics, and

Tolstoy asked one of his student visitors what he was studying at the University. Hearing that it was Western literature, he exclaimed :

‘Excellent ! Western literature is very rich. . . . One only regrets that *vita brevis, ars longa*. There is so much that is good and interesting and acts beneficently on the soul, that one has not time to read it all. I am just now studying a writer who is quite unknown among us—Amiel. My daughter has translated his *Journal Intime*. We are sending it for publication to the *Northern Messenger*, and I am thinking of writing a Preface. Unfortunately very little is known about him. Luckily N. I. Storozhénko has sent me some information, or I should not have known how to manage it.’

‘Under your editorship, Leo Nikoláyeitch, a booklet of translations of Guy de Maupassant’s stories has appeared,’ said one of the visitors. ‘Will any more be published ?’

‘Yes. . . . In my opinion, next to Victor Hugo, Maupassant is the best writer of our time. I am very fond of him, and rank him above all his contemporaries. I have written a Preface for an edition of his works which will appear shortly. In it I have fully explained my view of his works and especially of his talent.’

‘Excuse me, Leo Nikoláyeitch, but some people are rather surprised that your name should be in any way connected with the popularisation of the works of Maupassant. . . . It was thought that you would hardly have sympathised with a writer who chose such themes. . . .’

‘One must look at Maupassant from the right point of view,’ said Leo Nikoláyeitch. ‘Many people judge him wrongly. He is not only a man of remarkable talent, but the only writer who has, at last, understood and presented the whole negative side of the relations of the sexes. That implies real talent ! It is true that at first he went wrong, and approached the thing from quite another side. But he afterwards understood his mistake, and was, as it were, reborn. And no one else has described the sufferings and spiritual torments born of base relations with women, as he has done. Do you remember the story in which he describes a sailor’s encounter with his own sister in a house of ill-fame ? How that story sets one thinking !

What a deep trace it leaves on one's soul ! Such stories certainly cannot evoke in the reader any love of or interest in profligacy, no matter into what slough the author may lead us. . . . In Maupassant there was, however, an inner contradiction sure sooner or later to lead him to suicide. With what bitterness he describes a man's spiritual isolation and orphanage ! That gloom never really leaves him, and he more than once describes the fate of a solitary, deserted man, whom no one needs. . . . By all means, re-read Maupassant ! You will find much in him that is remarkable and highly instructive,' said Leo Nikoláyevitch, at parting.

By way of contrast with this talk with University students, let us take an account of a visit Tolstoy paid to an old peasant at the persuasion of Morózof, who had been a pupil in the Yásnaya Polyána school before Tolstoy's marriage.

The two hired a trap and drove to Tchúlkova, a slum suburb of Toúla. On the way, Tolstoy asked : 'What is your friend interested in ? If a man lives rightly, I would go not only to Tchúlkova, but a thousand versts to embrace him. . . .'

On reaching the peasant's house, Morózof says :

We passed through a narrow passage, I leading Leo Nikoláyevitch by the hand and telling him where to stoop, so as to avoid knocking his head. In the old man's hut it was light, and there were a good many people sitting around in holiday fashion, or as in a theatre, awaiting the performance. Leo Nikoláyevitch straightened his back and began taking off his overcoat. They offered to help him, but he said : 'Don't trouble, I'll manage it myself.' Having greeted the old man, he said, 'Good evening !' to them all, and sat down in a vacant place near the table ; and shading his eyes with his hand, cast a rapid glance from under his bushy brows at everybody, and then addressed the old man :

'Are all these your family ?'

'Yes, Count ! Except two strangers, all here are sons, daughters, grandsons, or granddaughters.'

'And how old are you ?'

'I am getting on in life, Count. . . . I'm nearly seventy-five.'

'Well, what of it? It is time we prepared to die and made room for others,' and Leo Nikoláyevitch glanced at the young people.

'We must die, Count! . . . But we must prepare ourselves, so as to have something to show when we get there,' said the old man.

'Yes, yes! We must prepare our souls. God expects good deeds from men, and if one's deeds are good, death is peaceful. But while we stand gaping, time flies fast. There now. . . . It seems not long since I was a student, and yet I am already sixty-five. Sometimes I think of what I have done for God, who sent me into the world pure and free from vice; and I feel that I have lived badly and not as Christ bade us. There have been all sorts of things in my life—illness, debauchery. I injured myself and others by my depraved life. I always wanted to get the worldly things that appeared desirable, while a good life is possible only in the truth: a life such as Socrates, Epictetus, the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius and others lived. That is how we ought to live, profiting by their example. God is a Spirit, and the spirit is in every man, and His work is all one, and His religion one, and His love one. "I in God, you in me, and I in you. He who lives in God, will never die."' "

Leo Nikoláyevitch stopped and gazed intently at a young man who was dressed like a member of the educated class, as if he wanted him to reply. The young man began, in the more or less easy tone of a shop-assistant:

'Exactly, Leo Nikoláyevitch! You speak very truly. Here am I working as a shop-assistant. I steal three yards of print from my employer, or some velvet, or a trouser-length, and feel I am a thief, and hide my action from my employer, and get it out of the customers by stretching the materials and so giving them short measure, and thus make up my master's loss. In that way we right ourselves towards our employer, but know we are sinning against the customer. We go to church, and do penance, and ask God's forgiveness. Of course we put a candle [before the icons of the Saints] for the print we have stolen,

another for the velvet, and another for the trousers. . . . As the value of the goods—so the size of the candle we offer to God.'

The young man stopped. I could see that his confession pleased Leo Nikoláyevitch, whose face brightened. Leaning towards the young man, he asked with a smile:

'Then you feel your sin when you do wrong?'

'Of course! However much one may pray, one can't help remembering that one is still in fault for that sin. . . .'

Leo Nikoláyevitch, having finished his conversation with the young man, again leant his elbows on the table and looked round, shading his eyes with his hand, and turning to the old man, said:

'Yes, time is short! The hour will soon strike when we shall be no more. And an empty sound will be all that is left of us after death.'

'Yes, Count . . . our weakness makes it impossible to get rid of all the worldliness within us,' said our host. 'Vanity of vanities! But God sent His Son for our salvation, to save the world and destroy sin. And we must imitate those who followed his teaching—we must turn to them. . . . Now, what kind of principles can *you* give these people? You give your opinion, they maintain theirs. . . . It is some kind of innovation imported from the West: no prayers, no veneration!'

The old man rose, stretched out his arm and, reaching down a small New Testament from a shelf, put it on the table and said:

'Don't be angry with me, Count, if I ask a few questions.'

'Not at all, not at all! I am always glad to answer as well as I can.'

'I have heard,' said the old man, 'that you do not go to church, and don't pray to God.'

'I don't go to church; but I do pray to God.'

'How do you pray, Count, if you do not believe in the Church founded by the Apostles? Have you not heard the deacon say, 'Let us pray to the Lord in community,' and the choir take up the words, 'Lord, have mercy!''? What a tremor goes through one at those words, and that singing! . . . The soul rises involuntarily to God in prayer. . . .'

Leo Nikoláyevitch said :

‘In the theatre one is also sometimes carried away in spirit to some God ; but all that is not congenial to me. My prayers are not made in church, but outside it ; within me. See what the Gospels say : “Go into your inner chamber and pray in secret, and God will reward you openly.” That is how I understand it, and I do so, and pray so.’

Looking at the old man, Leo Nikoláyevitch continued :

‘If you know the Gospels well, read Christ’s conversation with the Samaritan woman by the well.’

And he mentioned several other texts from the Gospels.

The old man made no rejoinder to the texts, but went on to speak of something else.

‘I have one more question, Count.’

‘If you please ! . . . What is it ?’

‘You believe there is a life beyond the grave ?’

‘That is not granted us to know ; especially in the sense of hell, pitch, molten lead, and torments. . . . Supposing now your children or grandchildren had done you some wrong, is it possible that to revenge yourself you would invent punishments : boil cauldrons of pitch and lead, and plunge the offenders into the cauldrons for eternal torment ? Tell me, would you consent to see your children tormented like that ?’

The old man covered his eyes with his hands.

‘What are you saying ? God help us ! . . . how could one look on at such things ?’

‘Much less could God, in whom there is more pity and love than in us ! How could He enjoy the sight of His children’s eternal punishment ?’

The old man stirred, and joy showed itself in his face.

‘Thank you, thank you, Count ! You have solved the question ! . . . I, too, have thought, “Why should God torment His children ?”’

In these conversations, and in scores of others that might be quoted, whether with students, peasants, acquaintances, or people Tolstoy just chanced to meet, one continually finds an eagerness to impart to them some thought or feeling that he valued. He had defined Education, thirty

years before this, as 'a human activity having for its basis a desire for equality, and the constant tendency to advance in knowledge'; and in that sense one may say that his conversation was truly educational: it aimed at placing his collocutors on a level with himself, and at increasing their understanding of the matter dealt with.

The death, on 27th January 1894, in Vorónesh prison-hospital, of E. N. Drózhzhin, the schoolmaster who had refused military service, made a very great impression on Tolstoy. 1894

Drózhzhin had been summoned to serve in August 1891, but on the ground that he was a Christian and wished to serve the Prince of Peace, he declined to take the oath which would have bound him to obey those who wished him to learn to slay his fellow-men. He was kept in solitary confinement in Khárkof for a year, and then sent to a Disciplinary Battalion at Vorónesh, where he was exposed to cold, hunger, and solitary confinement for fifteen months, until he became consumptive. He was then reported as unfit for military service, but was sentenced nevertheless to nine years' imprisonment. On his way from the Disciplinary Battalion to prison, he was kept standing for a long time in the street, one very cold day, without any warm clothing, and contracting inflammation of the lungs, he died three weeks later.

Ever since then, Tolstoy has been extremely interested in the cases of refusal of military service, news of which has reached him from nearly all countries in which conscription exists. How numerous such cases are is not generally known; for the military authorities are greatly concerned to keep them secret. The position of a Christian Government met by a refusal to learn to kill (based on obedience to Christ's commands) is a very difficult one. The fundamental clash between Christianity and patriotism is more vividly revealed by such incidents than by anything else, and both in Russia and elsewhere, the example of men



willing to die for their faith, constitutes a real danger to Imperialism. Cases, for instance, have occurred of soldiers being converted by non-resistant prisoners they had been set to guard, and deliberately laying down their arms. A problem I commend to the attention of Lord Roberts and our conscriptionists generally, is : How, in the case of those who believe they are sent into the world to benefit and not to slay their fellow-men, are you going to combine compulsory military service with freedom of conscience? Something might be said for demanding that every man should devote some years to the service of his country at risk to his life. But to forbid a man willing to spend that time in dangerous industrial occupations (such as coupling railway trucks, coal-mining, or work at a blast furnace) to be of use in that way, and to insist that he must train as a man-slayer, is to inflict on him an intolerable moral wrong, more calculated to make him hate his Government than love his country.

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## CHAPTER XIV

### THE DOUKHOBÓRS

[1894] Tolstoy's popularity. Cycling. Gay's picture. 'One must not seek persecution.' Death of N. N. Gay. Márya Lvóvna. 'Land should be free.' Masquerade. The Tolstoy family. *Christianity and Patriotism. Reason and Religion. Religion and Morality.* Mazzini's *Letter on Immortality. Karma.* [1895] Nicholas II's speech to Deputies. Death of son, Iván. *Master and Man.* At Yásnaya. *Shame!* The Doukhobórs. P. Verigin and the Tolstoyans. [1896] *Help!* V. Tchertkóf. Brotherhood Publishing Co. Peasant writers. Accessibility. *Archive.* Jane Addams. A visit to Yásnaya. Tolstoy at 68. Attacked by Holy Synod. *The Demands of Love.* Letter to E. H. Crosby. *A Letter to Liberals. The Christian Teaching.* [1897] Influence with peasants. The Tolstoy movement in England. Tolstoy's life threatened.

AFTER the strenuous famine-relief work of the two previous years, came a quiet period of steady literary work.

Tolstoy's popularity at this time was strikingly demonstrated by what happened at the Ninth Congress of Russian Naturalists, held in Moscow in January, 1894. Pro-  
fessor V. Zinger, with whom he had long been  
acquainted, was announced to speak at one of the large public meetings of the Congress, in the Nobility Hall, and the Professor's son invited Tolstoy to be present. At first the latter declined, on the ground that he was quite unaccustomed to large assemblies; but ultimately he went, turning up unexpectedly during the meeting; and as it was difficult to find him a seat, he was asked to go on the platform. His attitude towards Natural Science was known

to be a negative one, yet no sooner were the audience aware of his presence than thunders of applause broke out, long continued, and again and again repeated. Tolstoy was much abashed. He rose and bowed; and again a tumult of applause broke out, which seemed to shake the walls. Speaking of it afterwards to young Zinger, he said: 'Why did you tell me there would be no ceremony? . . . All those people in evening dress. . . . It was not a scientific meeting, but a scientific Carnival!'

How far Tolstoy was from being an old man at this time (counting in years he was sixty-six) is indicated by the almost boyish ardour with which he took to cycling. Bicycles were then just coming into use in Russia, and only those were allowed to use them in the large towns, who obtained a licence after demonstrating their proficiency to the police. Tolstoy easily performed the necessary horseshoe movement and a figure-of-eight, and rode off triumphantly with the permit and tin label which, according to the regulations, had to be attached to each bicycle.

The ardour he showed in cycling was, however, but a faint reflex of his interest in more serious matters. His friend Gay, having finished his great picture of the Crucifixion early this year, brought it, on his way to Petersburg, to show to Tolstoy, who asked to be left alone with it. Gay, on returning to the room, found him in tears. Embracing him, Tolstoy said, 'I feel, dear friend, that *that* was how it really happened! It is the greatest thing you have ever done!'

Of those who complained of the picture as lacking beauty, Tolstoy remarked that what such critics desire is, that one should 'paint an execution and make it look like a nosegay!'

Alexander III, when he saw the picture, said it was horrible, and its public exhibition was prohibited. Tolstoy wrote: 'When first I saw it, I was convinced that it would not be allowed; and when I now imagine an ordinary exhibition, with fine ladies and landscapes and paintings

of *nature morte*, it seems laughable to think it could be included.'

Side by side with his many interests, there was always present the question whether he would not be arrested—a thought which did not oppress, but rather stimulated him. On 1st June he wrote to Feinermann:

Two days ago I went with Tchertkóf to Krapívna, to see Boulýgin, who is in prison for refusing to provide horses for the army requisition. He is in the firmest and most cheerful frame of mind, and calmly and involuntarily preaches [to those whom he meets] in prison. I mean to go and see him again to-morrow.

Have you heard that Koudryávtséf has also been taken by the gendarmes, and is in confinement somewhere?

I feel it hard to be left at liberty. . . . However, one must not seek, any more than one must avoid [persecution].

That month, N. N. Gay, the most sympathetic and humane of the friends Tolstoy had attracted to himself, died suddenly. The simplicity, fervour, and genuineness of his artistic nature closely corresponded to one phase of Tolstoy's own more intellectually-powerful personality, and his death was a great loss to the latter.

All this time the family life at Yásnaya flowed on as usual, and one comes across many references to his children. For instance, Arboúzof tells us how Mary, the second daughter, applied her father's teaching to her own life:

No matter who fell ill in the village, Márya Lvóvna, as soon as she heard of it, would take various little bottles from her store, and go to the sufferer's hut and attend on him till he was well. To give one instance out of many: Dómna, the wife of one of the peasants, Vlás Evdokímof, was ill after childbirth. Márya Lvóvna at once began to doctor her. The illness lasted all the summer, and Márya Lvóvna looked after the sick woman and helped Vlás in all his domestic affairs; raking the hay he mowed and carting it to his yard. Later, when the rye was ripe, Vlás mowed it, and Márya Lvóvna bound the sheaves; and where it grew thick even reaped it with a sickle. In a word,

she worked in the field till harvest was over; and every day after work went home and fetched rye-bread and a pot of milk for Vlás and his family, and white bread and beef-tea for the sick Dómna. Then, returning home, she would do her own room, have her supper, and go to bed. She did not waste a single half-hour, and during the time of field-work never went out to sit on the terrace, where the family and the Kouzmínskys used to have tea.

The family spent the winter of 1894-5 in Moscow as usual; and there Semyónof (being entrusted by his village Commune with the purchase of some land) visited Tolstoy; and he thus reports a conversation they had about land-holding. Tolstoy asked:

‘Well, and are you too buying some of the land?’

‘I am taking 8 desyatínas [nearly 22 acres].’

Tolstoy smiled, and remarked: ‘Well, God will forgive you!’

‘What do you mean? Is it such a sin?’ said I, surprised.

‘Of course! Land is God’s gift. It can be no one’s property. It is as necessary as light and air, and should be as free as light and air for all to use.’

‘But it is not free. It is divided among people, and we have to pay heavily even to be allowed to use it. We are tired of paying rent, and have decided to get the freehold.’

‘That is why I say, “God will forgive you”; but He will not forgive those who own land and squeeze others with it.’

‘How should it be arranged?’

‘The land should be freed, and all private rights in it cancelled. The ownership of land is a terrible evil, which will be abolished.’ And he began to tell me about Henry George and his Single Tax system, which, were it introduced, would cause the land to be in the hands only of those who worked it, so that it would become impossible for any one to make it a means of exploiting other people.

‘But would such a tax not be too heavy for those who work the land?’

‘Not at all! The tax would be as much as the land would yield without labour by its fertility and nearness to a market.

If it would yield pasture for Rs. 3, that would be the tax. Or if a market was near at hand, so that one could get a good revenue from having a market-garden, one would have to pay more; and if the land was in the chief street in Moscow, one would have to pay a great deal for it, but it would be quite fair, for it is not the owner who gives land its value, but the whole community; and the community would only take back what is rightly its own!

'That is very good, but how is one to get it; how carry the reform through?'

'I think,' said Tolstoy, 'that such a Revolution could be carried out by the Tsar. As the emancipation of the serfs was accomplished by the will of the Tsar, so also the abolition of territorial injustice can be accomplished by the same power. . . . No other power will do it, because it will be contrary to the interests of the classes who would support a Constitutional power.'

It is curious that I should be translating that passage, just after the first taxation-of-land-values Budget has passed the House of Lords! The opposition it aroused among the propertied classes partly confirms Tolstoy's view; but the fact that it has passed, indicates (what Tolstoy is so reluctant to admit) that Constitutional and democratic institutions are not irreconcilable with progress—slow perhaps, but not less real—towards a time when 'every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low.'

At Christmas that year, the children arranged with some of their numerous friends to have a masquerade, in which celebrities personally known to them were personated: including Professor Zahárin, Anton Rubinstein, Vladímír Solovéf, Répin, and above all, Tolstoy himself. V. Lopátin was induced to undertake the latter rôle, and succeeded in making up so admirably, that when he appeared dressed in a blouse and belt of Tolstoy's (secretly procured for him by Tatiána Lvóvna) with his hands stuck in his belt in front in Tolstoy's customary way, many of the

guests mistook him for their host, who—himself taken quite by surprise—accepted the joke good-humouredly, and cordially shook hands with his pseudo self.

Lopátin mentions that he was glad of his opportunities to visit the Tolstoys, for it made it possible for him to convince himself of:

The ardour of Tolstoy's desire to find the truth of life, to obtain it from any source, and to induce people to follow the path that alone leads to the accomplishment of man's true destiny. The simplicity of Tolstoy's relation towards the thoughts and feelings of every man, his interest in what each one thought and knew, his bitter regret at the divergence between his view of life and the inclinations of those about him, and the pure, almost childish joy with which he glowed at any indication that his spiritual world was understood by some one else, convinced me of the profound honesty which has made the great artist a great Christian teacher.

The mingling of grave and gay in the family was often very striking. They were so close to life's great problems and dangers, yet there was so much of youth, mirth, art and animation. Contrasts help one to feel vividly; and I have never been more struck by the charm of simple music than when, one winter's evening in Moscow, calling to ask Tolstoy's explanation of some question that perplexed me, I chanced upon an assembly of guests, many of them young people. Tolstoy was engaged; and I waited, among people I did not know, in the little vestibule at the top of the stairs before entering the large, plainly furnished hall, in which the family usually drank tea and gathered for games or music. The eldest daughter came up to speak to me and put me at my ease; and Mary, accompanying herself on a guitar, struck up a gipsy song which she sang admirably. Others joined in the chorus. Song followed song, and one felt that their love of music was innate. When I came to know the family better, I realised how much amiability, talent, frankness and charm there was among them, apart from Tolstoy's own overpowering genius. If I, who came as

an outsider, drawn merely by interest in Tolstoy's views, and who for a long time feared to intrude on the Countess's domain, felt this, I think it must have been yet more strongly experienced by others.

It was the fashion at that time for Tolstoy's followers to speak of the Countess as the great obstacle to his carrying out his principles; and to suggest that were he but free to act, wonderful results would follow; but I do not think that either they or he had any clear idea of how he would have lived, or what he would have done, had he only had himself to consider.

Certainly the Countess's position has been one of extreme difficulty. She has played a very large part in her husband's life, and has devoted great attention to his material welfare. She has never concealed her disagreement with many of his views, and has often based her case frankly on grounds of family interest; but tried by ordinary standards, she has been an admirable wife—and to adopt in her case extraordinary standards, because her husband is an extraordinary man, would, I think, be very unfair.

During 1894 Tolstoy's literary work included—besides Prefaces to Maupassant's Tales, Semyónof's stories, and one to a Life of Drózhzhin—a short book, entitled *Christianity and Patriotism*, which, besides expounding the views alluded to in a previous chapter, contains some very clever ridicule of the patriotic enthusiasm into which crowds in Russia, and especially in France, were then being hypnotised by the festivities held in connection with the visits of the French and Russian fleets to Cronstadt and Toulon. Two essays, written at this time, are also worthy of particular attention, as they formed the commencement of a series of articles on Religion, expressing a broader and maturer view than that of the books he wrote in the years immediately following his Conversion.

The series I refer to contains: *Reason and Religion*, *Religion and Morality*, *How to Read the Gospels*, *A Reply to the Synod's Edict of Excommunication*, and *What is*



*Religion?* They are quite brief (occupying in all less than a hundred pages of *Essays and Letters*) and are the final outcome and ripe fruit of the intense struggles of a wonderful mind with the greatest of all problems. They were written over a period of eight years: the last of them not appearing till 1902.

Of the origin of the first of these essays, Feinermann writes:

‘I know,’ said Tolstoy, ‘that I shall be blamed; but still I must repeat: “Reason, reason, reason!” There is no other way to reach the truth. It is only through reason that we can nourish our minds, as it is only through our mouths that we can nourish our bodies. I have received a letter from a certain Baroness—very cordial and sincere. She is interested about religion, and honestly and frankly—though rather confusedly—questions the value of reason. I have been all day considering how to answer her, and the matter is becoming clearer and clearer to me.’

A few days later, on 26th November, the reply was finished. As it is brief, and accessible to English readers, I will not summarise it, but will only say that it clears Tolstoy from the charge often made against him of being a mystic,—if by ‘mystic’ is meant one who claims to have received any kind of revelation not accessible to sane men of good-will generally. It finishes with the statement that man’s duty (‘the will of God’) is known only:

By the use of reason by all men, transmitting both by deed and word, one to another, the consciousness of truth that is ever elucidating itself to them more and more. . . . So I think the clearing-up by each man of all religious truth accessible to him, and its expression in words (for expression in words is one sure sign of complete clearness of thought) is one of the chief and most holy duties of man.

Copies of this epistle were sent to the various Tolstoy Colonies, and aroused much discussion and many disputes; for a strong current of mystical dogmatism had sprung up

among his followers, and this pastoral epistle caused sundry splits in the movement. Eventually many Tolstoyans returned to the bosom of Mother Church; and some even became monks and nuns, and reproached Tolstoy bitterly for his rationalism.

‘I know, I know!’ said Tolstoy, when he heard of these things; ‘but I must still repeat: “Reason, reason, reason!”’

The next of this series was *Religion and Morality*, finished on 28th December 1894. It was written in reply to an inquiry from a member of an Ethical Society, who asked Tolstoy what he meant by ‘religion,’ and whether morality could exist independently of it. The article contains a classification of religions into three groups: (1) Selfishness—the religion of all the babies, who desire as much milk and warmth and comfort for themselves as possible, and do not care what happens to the rest of the world; (2) Patriotism—the religion of all who make the welfare of their family, clan, group, or nation (or even, in the case of Positivists, the whole of humanity) the chief aim of their life; and (3) those who recognise some supreme Lord or Law, whose service transcends any calculable advantage accruing to themselves or to their group. Every sane man must of necessity have a ‘religion’: that is to say, must have some outlook on life enabling him to know why he approves of some things and disapproves of others. His outlook on life, however expressed, explains his rational—as distinct from his merely instinctive—motives for action, and tends to shape his course. In actual life, many people are more or less swayed by two, or even by all three, of these religions at once; but one or more of them they must have, if their life has any purpose at all.

The conclusion at which Tolstoy arrives, is that ‘Religion is a certain relation established by man between his separate personality and the infinite universe or its Source; and morality is the ever-present guide to life, resulting from that relation.’

The essay contains incidentally an excellent criticism of Huxley's Romanes Lecture, delivered that year, and subsequently published in that author's *Evolution and Ethics*.

Other writings of the year were translations of Mazzini's *Letter on Immortality*, and of *Karma*, a Buddhist legend which Tolstoy borrowed from Paul Carus.

The new year began very sadly both in public and private affairs. On 30th January, Nicholas II received the representatives of the Local Government bodies, who came  
1895 to Petersburg to congratulate him on his accession to the throne; and when one or two in their Addresses ventured respectfully to suggest the necessity of allowing to the representatives of the people some voice in public matters, he made the memorable speech in which he said: 'It is not unknown to me that recently in some Zémstvo meetings, voices have been heard of men who have been carried away by insensate fancies concerning the participation of representatives of the Zémstvos in the affairs of the Government of the country. Let all men know that I, devoting my whole strength to the national welfare, will maintain the principle of autocracy as firmly and infallibly as it was preserved by my late never-to-be-forgotten parent.'

He only receded from that position ten years later, when the disasters of the Russo-Japanese war had made obvious the impossibility of governing so immense an Empire without allowing any free expression of public opinion. Even then it was not till a railway strike had isolated Petersburg from the rest of the country, that he granted something that looked like a Constitution.

This speech naturally evoked indignation among all who desired emancipation from the thralldom that was stifling Russia. Prince D. N. Shahovskóy has told how it fell to his lot to call on Tolstoy one very frosty day, and to invite him to attend a private meeting presided over by P. N. Milukóf, at which the situation was to be

discussed by some of the representative Local Government reformers.

On his arrival at Tolstoy's Moscow house, Shahovskóy was told by the man-servant that the Count was in the yard and would not be disengaged for two hours. By a little persistence, the Prince managed to get admission to the yard, where he found Tolstoy, axe in hand, breaking the ice in a large water-tub. Hearing the object of the Prince's visit, he uttered the words, 'insensate fancies,' in such a tone that Shahovskóy felt that no persuasion was necessary, and that he had only to tell Tolstoy of the time and place of the gathering.

That meeting, however, furnished a fresh proof that Russian public opinion was not then ripe for political action. The feeling of indignation was strong, but found no outlet. Tolstoy was as indignant as any one, though he spoke with quiet self-restraint. One of the proposals made was to publish in the press of Western Europe a protest on behalf of educated Russians against the Tsar's rejection of their claim to be heard. Tolstoy was asked to draw this up, and did not definitely refuse, but said that his intervention would not have the desired effect, for any protest from him would be connected with his Christian-anarchist views, and would therefore not be regarded as representing a broad public opinion.

Naturally, he did not sympathise with any plans for an organised resistance. 'What,' said he, 'do we need an organisation for? Don't we, as it is, form a Masonic Lodge in which two words enable us to understand one another, and call us to the common cause? When Shahovskóy came to me, do you suppose we needed any Masonic signs?'

Following this public calamity, came a great personal grief. Little seven-year-old Ványa (Iván) died on 23rd February. It was the first time Tolstoy and his wife had lost a child that had outgrown early infancy; and what made the loss yet more severe, was that Ványa (their

youngest) was highly gifted, and showed signs of having inherited the best qualities of his parents. To the Countess the blow was a crushing one, and she was in such despair that for a while she prayed to die. She dreaded the thought of going back to Yásnaya, where she would miss the child even more than in Moscow; and plans were formed for going abroad. At this crisis, Tolstoy showed his wife great consideration. Much as it would have run counter to his inclination to leave Russia, he was ready to do so for her sake; but a private intimation reached them from a relation in Petersburg, that though no obstacle would be placed in the way of Tolstoy's leaving the country, it was improbable that he would be allowed to return. The journey abroad was therefore abandoned. Tolstoy was himself ill at this time, and went to a doctor every day for a slight operation, so that the family did not move to the country till June, by which time the Countess had become resigned to a return to Yásnaya.

On hearing of his son's death, I wrote Tolstoy a letter of condolence; and a little later, when we were sitting in his room, one evening, I noticed that he paused in what he was saying to another visitor, and looked at me to attract my attention. He then went on to speak of death, and said that it was a mistake to exaggerate its sorrow. What is really terrible is not death, but life lived without a purpose. I forget his words, but I remember that he made us feel that the ordinary expressions and shows of grief should not be encouraged. There is, no doubt, an inevitable and irrepressible regret for dear ones removed by death or distance; but our aim should be not to give way to it, and rather to encourage and help the living, than to pine for the dead or absent. If that were generally done, how much brighter the world would be! The worst evil caused by a death among us, often lies, not in the loss of him who is gone, but in the depression of those who are left. We are not here to please ourselves, but to do the will of the Power that endows us with reason and conscience.

Feinermann, hearing a false rumour that Tolstoy was going abroad to escape arrest, wrote to him about it, and received this reply :

We did prepare to go abroad, but voluntarily, and not in connection with any persecution or the possibility of any. I, sinner that I am, desire persecution, and have to restrain myself not to provoke it. But it seems I am unworthy, and shall have to die without having lived even approximately, or for a little while, as I consider right, and that it will not fall to my lot to bear witness to the truth by any suffering.

I do not think one should evade persecution, but should rather remember and follow the words : ' He that endureth to the end shall be saved.' What prompted us towards going abroad, was my wife's state of health and her terribly overwrought state of soul after the death of our youngest son, Vánitchka. [Diminutive form of Ványa, the pet name of Iván.]

Now that she is suffering so much, I feel with every nerve of my body the truth of the words that a man and wife are not separate beings, but one. . . . I should awfully like to give her if but a part of the religious consciousness which I possess (feebly, yet sufficiently to enable me sometimes to rise above life's woes) because I know that that alone—the consciousness of God, and of one's sonship to him—gives life ; and I hope it will be given to her, not of course by me, but by God—though it reaches women with great difficulty.

Early in that year he had finished a story, with the triumph of unselfish joy over death as its theme. Simply and admirably written, *Master and Man* once more proved that his command of his art remained unimpaired by increasing years or stress of soul. It is a straightforward country tale of the master (an innkeeper and village merchant) and his man being overtaken by a snowstorm and losing their way. Warmly clad and well fed, the master lies on the almost frozen body of his poor servant, and saves his life. When some peasants dig them out of the snowdrift next morning, the master himself is found frozen to death. His last moments were full of gladness

at having found the pearl of great price that lies in human sympathy.

Semyónof, who visited Yásnaya that summer, tells us of the life he found there:

The family life at Yásnaya, as in Moscow, was that of a land-owner, bright and bustling. This did not accord with Tolstoy's own serious view of labour, and his disapproval of idleness and luxury; and this involuntarily distressed one. One pitied Tolstoy, who had by this time lost his own enthusiasm for field-work and for helping the peasants with personal service, and who now lived without it. But after lunch Tatiána Lvónna announced that a woman from the village, who had borrowed some straw from the estate and had undertaken to bind a desyatína of rye, had come to say that she had been summoned to do the work, but could not do it now because one of her family was ill; and asked Tatiána Lvónna to get the steward to let her postpone the work.

'Let us go and bind the rye for her,' suggested Tatiána Lvónna.

Half-a-dozen of us, including Tatiána Lvónna and Márya Lvónna, and from among the guests, M. A. Schmidt, Birukóf, a young lad, and myself, volunteered and went very willingly to the work. . . . The rye was soon tied, the sheaves piled up, and we returned home gaily.

That was the only time that at Yásnaya I saw personal help, by work, being given to the peasants. Other kinds of help—medicine, advice, and money—I noticed every time I was there.

Besides the story already mentioned, Tolstoy wrote, this year, *Three Parables*, and a vehement protest entitled *Shame!* against the practice—which had been re-introduced and legalised—of flogging peasants.

In this year, too, he wrote the first of his articles on the Doukhobórs, entitled *A Persecution of Christians in Russia*. It appeared in London, in the *Times*. Having already written a book about the Doukhobórs,<sup>1</sup> I do not want here

<sup>1</sup> *A Peculiar People: the Doukhobórs.*

to say more about them than is necessary to explain Tolstoy's interest in them, and the connection between their movement and his.

There is much that is remarkable and good about the Doukhobórs, and much that deserves to be remembered—as, for instance, their sturdy endurance under persecution—but to make my present story clear, I have to emphasise the point which has been most misunderstood and has caused much confusion.

Reading the Tolstoyan pronouncements about the Doukhobórs, or their own statements about themselves, one would suppose them to be the most reasonable and excellent of Christians—regarding all men as brothers and equals, and living in peace and amity with all men, without force or law, and needing no government but that of their own reason and conscience, and the advice of their 'elected' Elders. Yet during the fifteen years we have had them in view, not one single person, English, Russian, or Canadian, has ever become a Doukhobór, or settled among them as one of themselves, though many have wished to do so. Evidently there is something that needs explaining. What is it?

The reply is, that the orthodox Doukhobór believes his Leader, Peter Verígin, to be (like his predecessors in the Leadership) an incarnation of the Deity, and, that they are an exclusive and secretive people. Taught by the persecutions of the past, they do not disclose this mystery to outsiders, and are, consequently, cut off from the rest of the world by a double wall of superstition and clandestinity. An ignorance of this fact at first, and an unwillingness to admit it afterwards, has warped all the Tolstoyan statements about them. We shall presently see how this came about.

The extent to which the more intelligent Doukhobórs really believed in the divinity of Verígin, is open to discussion; just as it is difficult to say how firmly the more intelligent members of the Church of England believe, to-day, in the Trinity and the Scheme of Redemption. But the



practical importance of the doctrine of the incarnation of their Leader is shown not merely by the evidence of those who have studied the matter most carefully and impartially, but also by the fact that the history of their movement becomes quite intelligible as soon as one grasps that clue to its perplexities, but presents a series of insoluble puzzles until one does so.

Since 1844, the Doukhobórs have been a sect resident in the Caucasus. One of their Leaders, Peter Kalmikóf, on his death-bed, in 1864, named his wife, Loukériya Vasilyevna, to succeed him. She took into her favour a handsome young man of the ruling family, named Peter Verigin, separated him from his wife, had him to live near her, and caused him to be regarded as her successor. He, however, on one occasion let his wife come to Tiflis to meet him. Loukériya, hearing of this, fell into a great rage, had a fit, and died without, after all, appointing him to be her successor. Her relations and near adherents, knowing she had quarrelled with Peter, doubted the genuineness of his divinity, and refused to recognise him. Most of the Doukhobórs, and especially those living farther off, and who knew least about the quarrel, accepted him as Leader, and a bitter feud commenced between adherents and opponents. The Russian Authorities were appealed to, to decide who was to have possession of the 'Widow's House,' as the Doukhobórs' Communal House — to which considerable property was attached—was called.

They decided in favour of the anti-Veriginites; and, in 1887, banished Verigin, by Administrative Order, to a small town in Lapland. During his stay there, in spite of the vigilance of the police, Doukhobór emissaries again and again succeeded in visiting him, supplied him with money, and received his instructions.

Precepts of poverty, chastity and Non-Resistance, as well as a condemnation of war and Government, much resembling Tolstoy's teaching, have been held for centuries by various peasant sects, whose spiritual descendants the Doukhobórs

of the eighteenth century were. But after the Doukhobórs ceased to be a scattered sect and became a compact clan, they unconsciously abandoned their principles and submitted to a Theocratic despotism, without, however, ceasing to talk the language of Christian anarchism. It then became customary for them to serve in the army, and to hold private property. But now Verígin met exiles who told him of Tolstoy's views, and lent him Tolstoy's writings; and it struck him that besides being largely in accord with early Doukhobór doctrines, Tolstoy's Non-Resistance principles, involving the rejection of conscription, furnished an admirable weapon for use against the Government that had banished him. Accordingly, through the Doukhobórs who visited him, he instructed his followers to practise Non-Resistance, to cease holding private property, to share all things in common, to abstain from intoxicants and narcotics, to become vegetarians, and during the 'time of their tribulation' (*i.e.*, apparently, during his exile) to abstain from marital relations. Not all his followers were able to endure so sweeping a reformation, and this advice occasioned a fresh split in the sect.

The Government, noticing that the continued ferment among the Doukhobórs was influenced by Verígin, decided to remove him to a yet more inaccessible locality, and sent him, *via* Moscow, to Obdórsk, in Northern Siberia.

It was at this time that Tolstoy first made personal acquaintance with the Doukhobórs. He met three of them, who came to Moscow to see their Leader on his way to Siberia. Naturally he was delighted to discover people who, apparently of their own accord, carried out the principles he advocated—principles that met with so feeble a response among his own class. Here, at last, were men not merely professing, but apparently practising, the very principles of Christian anarchy dear to him, and *without that disintegrating result* that had been so evident in the Tolstoy Colonies. It never occurred to him to suspect that they were governed by a Theocracy, and had a Moses to hand them down fresh Tables of the Law, as and when required. So

he wrote that what was occurring among them was 'the germinating of the seed sown by Christ 1800 years ago - the resurrection of Christ himself,' and added that the main condition for the attainment of a Christian life among us, 'is the existence and gathering together of people who even now realise that towards which we are all striving. And behold, these people exist!'

Verigin's blow aimed at the Russian Government was a serious one. Nothing could be more awkward for a great military Power than to have the occasional and sporadic refusals of military service to which it was accustomed, suddenly reinforced by a collective refusal proceeding from a well-organised sect, who based their action ostensibly on the teaching of Christ.

In accord with instructions from Verigin, the Doukhobórs held a large meeting on 29th June 1895 (the eve of his name's day, St. Peter's Day) at which they publicly burnt the arms which they were in the habit of carrying. While so engaged, Cossack troops fell upon them and flogged them cruelly. It would take too long to tell of the persecution that followed. Their first martyr was Sherbínin, brutally done to death in a Penal Battalion, in August 1896. Hundreds more died from exposure and lack of food, and from banishment to unhealthy places where they could find no work.

The news of this persecution greatly grieved Tolstoy, who was extremely indignant that such things should be possible; and he and Tchertkóf arranged for P. I. Birukóf to go to the Caucasus and collect information for publication. Birukóf's intentions were admirable, but unfortunately he started with a bias; and instead of visiting all sections of the Doukhobórs and learning what their quarrels were really about, he contented himself with what was told him by the Veriginites; and drew up a report which missed the very point essential to an understanding of what had happened—a point already known to the Government.

On his return to Moscow, Tchertkóf, Tregóúbof and he

issued an urgent Appeal for help. This was admirable, in that it drew attention to the cruelties inflicted on a well-intentioned and industrious peasantry, but it erred by representing them as being highly enlightened and free from superstition. It said :

The Spirit Wrestlers [*i.e.* the Doukhobórs] base their mutual relations and their relations to others—and not only to people, but to all living creatures—exclusively on love ; and, therefore, they regard all men as equals and brothers. They extend this idea of equality to the Government authorities ; obedience to whom they do not consider binding upon them when the demands of the authorities conflict with their conscience ; though, in all that does not infringe what they regard as the will of God, they willingly fulfil the wishes of the authorities.

Tolstoy, in an *Afterword*, said this Appeal had been repeatedly

Verified, revised and sifted ; several times recast and corrected ; everything has been rejected from it which, although true, might seem an exaggeration ; so that all that is now stated in this Appeal is the real, indubitable truth, as far as the truth is accessible to men guided only by the religious desire to serve God and their neighbours, both the persecuted and the persecutors.

Yet, of 20,000 Doukhobórs, less than half ultimately followed Verigin, and the Appeal did very grave injustice to those Doukhobórs who had been sufficiently enlightened to throw off his yoke—often at the cost of severe persecution at the hands of his followers.

Had the Doukhobórs really carried on their Community peacefully and well for a century, with no government but such as was purely voluntary, and uninfluenced by force or superstition, they would really have demonstrated the possibility of anarchism as a workable social system, and their example would have been invaluable to Tolstoy's propaganda. Unfortunately the facts do not fit that view of the case, and, still more unfortunately, the Tolstoyans—anxious

that the facts should fit their theory—were extraordinarily blind to what was fairly obvious to other observers.

Had Tolstoy personally been much in contact with the Doukhobórs, he would have noticed that something was wrong; but he was well over sixty-five, and though still very vigorous both in mind and body he was too much engaged with his own work to spare much personal attention for the Doukhobór business, greatly as it interested him. He relied on the reports collected for him, and lent the weight of his authority to what ultimately turned out to be a mistaken view of the case. In this connection two letters of his to Peter Verigin,<sup>1</sup> written in November 1895 and October 1896, are worthy of attention.

Peter Verigin was quite unaccustomed to play second fiddle to any one, and on coming into communication with the Tolstoyans in exile, set himself to go one better than Tolstoy. For instance, he suggested that people ought not to be satisfied with making their own boots, but ought to give up the use of all things made of metal, since to obtain metal, men have to be sent to labour in the mines. (Perhaps he confused convict labour in Siberian mines, with mining in general.) He also elaborated a suggestion Tolstoy himself has made, that the writing and printing of books is an evil, for the books are often harmful, and their production involves an immense expenditure of labour which might be devoted to the production of food and shelter for those who are in need. There is, it will be remembered, in Tolstoy's character a tendency to opposition; and when Verigin wrote these things, Tolstoy replied by pointing out the good books do, and especially the fact that there are already so many harmful books in the world, that the evil can now only be met by writing better books. 'One wedge drives out another.' In his reply to Verigin, he even goes so far as to say:

To speak frankly, your stubborn contention against books

<sup>1</sup> See *Essays and Letters*, p. 167.

seems to me a peculiarly sectarian method of defending a once adopted and expressed opinion. And such a peculiarity does not accord with the conception I had formed of your intellect, and especially of your candour and sincerity.

With regard to mining, he said :

As to your argument that to produce books and railroads people have to burrow underground for ore and to work at a furnace, why—all *that* has to be done before one can have even a ploughshare, or spade, or a scythe. And there is nothing bad in burrowing underground for ore, or working at a furnace ; and when I was young I would willingly have done both to show my spirit, and so would any good young fellow to-day, provided the work were not compulsory, nor for life, and were surrounded by the conveniences which will certainly be devised as soon as every one is expected to work, and the labour is not put on wage-slaves only.<sup>1</sup>

Reading these letters, one regrets that so many people (including myself) have often urged Tolstoy to be more moderate, and to recognise the good side of existing industry and institutions. Had he but been surrounded by people who played in another octave, and outran him in the adoption of extreme conclusions, we might have had from him many more letters like these, full of sound, practical sense, and showing an appreciation of things as they are.

Verigin continued to amuse his leisure by writing letters to the Tolstoyans, suggesting the moral desirability of setting our horses and cattle free from the slavery of having to serve us, and of ceasing to spoil the earth by tillage. Why not rely on Nature for our support? Why not live in a warm climate, where fruits and nuts ripen of themselves, and man is free to spend his time in contemplation? Tolstoy, to show the wrongfulness of modern business and politics, had dwelt on the teaching and example of Christ; and Verigin again went one better by pointing out that,

<sup>1</sup> *Essays and Letters*, p. 172.

'We must live as he lived, and we see that Christ did no physical work, nor did the Apostles.' Pushing the idea of simplification to a yet further extreme, he suggested that if only we choose our place of residence rightly, clothing is a useless and immoral luxury. 'That the Apostles and Christ wore clothes and ate bread was natural, for there were plenty of clothes and bread, and (one must add) even Christ and the Apostles were not able, all at once, to go naked.'

All this was, in its way, very good fooling, and no doubt gave Tregóubof and the other Tolstoyans to whom it was addressed plenty to think about. But Peter Verigin had little idea of adopting the practices he commended, and was careful enough not to write them to his followers; yet by the queer irony of fate, these letters played a part in the subsequent story of his sect, and set 1500 Doukhobórs tramping on Pilgrimage through Canada, and originated the Nudity Parades practised by a small number of the more extreme of them later on, in defiance of Verigin's wish, and much to the perplexity and scandal of the Canadians.

For a while things remained as I have described: Verigin in exile in Siberia; the Veriginite Doukhobórs refusing army-service and severely persecuted; Tolstoy and the Tolstoyans (with whom I was in alliance, and whose views I accepted) sincerely representing this resistance as resulting solely from the fact that the Doukhobórs understood Christianity sanely and adhered to it faithfully.

The publication, in December 1896, of *Help!* led to the banishment of Birukóf and Tregóubof to small towns in the Baltic Provinces, while Tchertkóf, whose family are very wealthy and have influence at Court, was allowed to go abroad. He settled in England, and resided there till 1908, when he returned to Russia.

He is Tolstoy's closest friend and the warmest propagandist of his opinions; and to him Tolstoy entrusts the practical management of his public affairs: such as the publication of his forbidden works, and at the time of

which I am speaking, the business of the Doukhobór Migration.

This close relation between Tolstoy and Tchertkóf, and the effect it has had on Tolstoy's public acts, is a matter I find it particularly difficult to deal with, or even quite to understand. Tchertkóf has much in common with Tolstoy, but has also a striking individuality of his own, and has exercised considerable influence on his friend and teacher. In spite of my strong desire to be on good terms with Tolstoy's friend and representative, I failed to get on well with him, and am perhaps not capable of doing him justice. Yet so intimately was he connected with Tolstoy's public activity that I cannot leave him out of the picture.

Once, when lecturing on Tolstoy in Chicago, a man in the gallery asked me: 'What has Tolstoy *done*?' It seemed that the obvious answer was, that he had set people thinking and had stirred their consciences; but I understood that the man meant to say: 'Leaving aside what he has said and written, how has Tolstoy managed his public affairs?' Nor is that an unfair question, for Tolstoy has frequently told us to judge the organisers of Churches and States by their works; and it is obviously unfair to try them by their works, and him by his aims and aspirations. We must, in fairness, have one standard for both. He has eaten and written: which means that people have had to produce food and paper and books. What, then, has he *done*? How has he managed his business?

As regards his private affairs, the reader already knows the reply. Tolstoy has handed over his estates to his wife and family, and lives on their hospitality. Who can grudge freedom from care for his own material support to a man who has given so much to the service of truth? Yet, to hand the management of affairs over to others, does not solve—it only postpones or relegates—the moral and other difficulties involved in the maintenance of human existence. The hermits and the monastic Orders of the Middle Ages, who lived on charity, had done much the same thing; and



we know that they did not solve the economic problem for us.

His public affairs he has also handed over, into Tchertkóf's charge, and again it would be churlish to object to his transferring to other shoulders the burden of business that would have hampered his literary work. But in dealing with property or power, the moral responsibility that clings to its acquisition, use, or retention, clings also to its transference; and one cannot help asking whether it has been wisely transferred, and whether Tolstoy's great influence has been used well, no matter whether by himself or through another. Therefore the public activity of Tchertkóf—Tolstoy's representative in public matters, and the man frequently authorised to inform the press of Tolstoy's decisions and wishes—must interest those interested in Tolstoy.

There is no doubt of Tchertkóf's devotion to his teacher, or of his genuine disapproval of the existing order of society. The denunciatory side of Tolstoy is well represented by him; it is the humble, forbearing, patient, considerate, and enduring side, that is not so. Descended from serf-owning ancestors, the spoilt and only son of a fond mother, widow of a very wealthy land-owner, he has never endured discipline, or been trained to self-control. Our statesmen and public men are subject to a great deal of criticism and plain-speaking, and have their conduct judged by certain recognised standards set by law or custom. But Tchertkóf, in the exercise of his power and influence as Tolstoy's representative, has not been subject to any such healthy restraint. He acted in Tolstoy's name, and Tolstoy's reputation has shielded him from criticism. Then, again, there is no recognised criterion to try him by; for Tolstoy had repudiated all the customary standards of business life, and Tchertkóf has been in the position one sometimes sees children in, who invent and alter the rules of their game while they are playing it.

It must be admitted that, with regard to the publications, the task before him was an unusual and very complex one.

As already mentioned, many of Tolstoy's later works are forbidden in Russia; and the rule about these was not fixed or definite. Works allowed in one edition, may or may not be allowed in another. Russia does not belong to the Berne Convention, and therefore any one in any other country may translate and use as he likes a Russian author's work as soon as it appears; and by his specific declaration that people may do as they like with his works after they have once been published, Tolstoy has abandoned even that degree of moral control which, as a matter of courtesy, authors are generally allowed to exercise over their own works in lands where they are not copyright.

Beyond all this, the translation of Tolstoy's works presents certain difficulties, and besides a knowledge of Russian, and a mastery of the language into which the works are translated, the task often demands a knowledge of peasant and other Russian customs and speech, and an understanding of the peasants' outlook on life.

The task of making Tolstoy's prohibited works as accessible and as intelligible as possible to those who do not read Russian, was therefore one to tax the ingenuity and industry of the most tactful and methodical of men; and Tchertkóf seems not to have appreciated its difficulties. For instance, he handed over the arrangements for the English versions to J. C. Kenworthy, who knew no Russian at all; and this, merely because Kenworthy was the most prominent English advocate of Tolstoyan No-Government, Non-Resistant views, and had started a Brotherhood Church at Croydon, and a Brotherhood Publishing Company for the publication of works with a Tolstoyan tendency. How much trouble and confusion this arrangement produced, may be illustrated by the fact that some years later, when my wife translated *Resurrection*, I received from Kenworthy a demand to hand over the book to him. He wrote that Tolstoy had given it, and my wife's translation of it, to him. Tolstoy, when referred to, quite denied having done anything of the kind, and I did not know what to make of the claim until, after

Kenworthy had been put into a lunatic asylum, his son found among his papers the following letter, which throws light on the matter:

JOHN C. KENWORTHY, CROYDON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,— Sympathising with all my heart with the aims of your Brotherhood Publishing Co., I intend to put at your disposition the first translation of all my writings as yet unpublished, as well as forthcoming. Should you find it in any way expedient, as for instance in order to secure for them a wider circulation, to offer the first publication of any of my works to one of the English periodical papers or magazines, and should any pecuniary profit therefrom ensue, I would desire it to be devoted to the work of your Brotherhood Publishing Company.

As for the further right of publishing my works (*i.e.* after this the first appearance in English, which I intend placing at your disposal) they are to become public property in accordance with a statement I have formerly made public and now desire to confirm.—Yours truly,

LEO TOLSTOY.

Moscow, 4 Feb. 1896.

Tolstoy has no recollection of writing this letter; but he sometimes signs letters without much consideration, when asked to do so. J. C. Kenworthy was sufficiently aware of the extremely unbusiness-like character of its wording, to avoid showing it about; but he himself apparently took it to mean that a free gift would be made to him of the first translation of all Tolstoy's writings by whomsoever made. Probably much that was eccentric in his conduct can be traced to the hopes aroused by this curiously indefinite promise, and by his subsequent disappointment over it. The Brotherhood Publishing Company soon passed out of Kenworthy's control, which increased the muddle still more. All I can say definitely about the matter is that Tchertkóf told me of the arrangement at the time. From the way he spoke I concluded that he had arranged the matter, and he did not seem to see that it mattered whether Kenworthy knew Russian or not.

We shall see later on that the publication of Tolstoy's works gave rise to much friction, and that Tolstoy himself, as well as many other people, suffered from these disputes. But most of these things were still in the womb of the future at the time we are now dealing with.

After the first Moscow performance of the *Power of Darkness* in 1896, a crowd of students went to his house and gave him an ovation. He was much touched by this, for he always particularly prized the opinions of students and of the rising generation. But, as usual on such occasions, he felt very awkward, and hardly knew what to say to them.

The struggle always going on within him, sometimes showed itself in curious ways. For instance, when some one wished to make him a birthday present of a new bicycle, he went to the shop and selected one that pleased him; but before it had been delivered, his conscience troubled him, and he changed his mind, cancelled the order, and continued to use a shabby old bicycle belonging to one of his sons. Apropos of this incident, he told me that it was so long since he had had any exclusive possession of his own that needed looking after and taking care of, that he felt he ought not again to allow himself to be so encumbered.

Tolstoy was, and still is, continually pestered by demands for money from all sorts of people, and he once humorously remarked that he had thought of acquiring an inexhaustible purse to supply the daily demands made upon him, but found it would take all his time to get the money out for those who wanted it; so he preferred to do without the purse!

His patience was also often tried by poets and other writers who wanted his opinion on their productions. T. V. Pozdnyakóv has told how, at the age of twenty, after working in a factory, and as a house-porter, as a carter, and in a laundry, he made his way, with fear and trembling, to Tolstoy's house, to show him his poems. He took with him a letter he had prepared, and this he handed to the foot-

man, and waited. After a while Tolstoy appeared and said: 'I can't do anything for you. You know, I have no money about me.' Pozdnyakóf, greatly abashed, tremblingly explained that it was not money he wanted; and ultimately Tolstoy took him to his room and, glancing at his poems and reading a bit here and there, said:

There is nothing original here; and besides, everybody writes poems nowadays. There are hundreds and hundreds of people turning them out! And not one of them writes a single good line. In the days of Poushkin and Lermontof there used to be poetry, but not now. Verses have gone out of fashion. And what's the good of them? You will agree that prose expresses our thoughts much better—it is easier to read and has more sense in it. Take our conversation, for instance: we say what we want to. But if some one tried to put it into verse, it would come out all upside-down. Wherever a definite, clear expression is wanted, it either spoils the rhythm, or doesn't suit the style: and one has to substitute some other word, often far from the real meaning.

Tolstoy advised him to go back to work in the village, and to try to write some stories in prose. Pozdnyakóf went away greatly depressed, and, meeting with further difficulties and disappointments, resolved to commit suicide, but was saved by an uncle and taken back to the village, where he really took to writing in prose, and has achieved some success in recounting peasant traditions and beliefs.

Peasant writers of talent who dealt sympathetically with peasant life, have received much encouragement from Tolstoy, even if they wrote in verse. One of these, V. Lyapounóf, even became Manager of the Yásnaya Polyána estate.

Among writers not of that class, Anton Tchéhof was one of Tolstoy's favourites, both as a man and as an author. Tolstoy regretted that Tchéhof's works expressed no clear philosophy of life, but he highly prized his artistic qualities. He was also much interested in Tchéhof's plays; but one day at parting, much to Tchéhof's amusement, Tolstoy said

to him, with a touch of that humour which so often flashes out in his conversations: 'You are a very good fellow, and I am very fond of you; and, as you know, I can't bear Shakespeare, but still, his plays are better than yours!'

In my own intercourse with Tolstoy I was struck by the fact that as soon as he was convinced that one was really interested in life's great problems, all barriers of race, nationality, rank, education, and ability were thrown down, and one was able to talk to him quite frankly, and on a footing of equality.

He once remarked to me:

I divide men into two lots. They are freethinkers, or they are not freethinkers. I am not thinking of the Freethinkers who form a political party in Germany, nor of the agnostic English Freethinkers, but am using the word in its simplest meaning. Freethinkers are those who are willing to use their minds without prejudice, and without fearing to understand things that clash with their own customs, privileges, or beliefs. This state of mind is not common, but it is essential for right thinking; where it is absent, discussion becomes worse than useless. A man may be a Catholic, a Frenchman, or a capitalist, and yet be a freethinker; but if he puts his Catholicism, his patriotism, or his interest above his reason, and will not give the latter free play where those subjects are touched, he is not a freethinker. His mind is in bondage.

Always the password to intimacy with him was intellectual integrity. Any man whom he recognised as honest and in earnest, was his friend. Devotion to Non-Resistant and anti-Government views sometimes biassed his judgment, but it happened that I had not definitely cleared up my own views on those matters at the time I saw most of him, and I was then so far under his sway that we did not come into collision about them. I was so much attracted by his writings, and so indignant at the grossly unfair attacks frequently made upon him by opponents, that I did not stop to consider very closely the consequences of his anti-political programme. It seemed to me that he was fond of paradox and

contradiction, and sometimes said outrageous things, but that, as he is certainly a sensible, shrewd, experienced man, it was impossible that he really meant that one must allow a man to kill his wife in a fit of passion, rather than benevolently use physical force to restrain him. I must have been very slow to understand him on this matter, for even after I had left Russia and made my home in England, I had strenuous disputes with some of his friends about it, and, on referring to Tolstoy, was dismayed to find that he fully endorsed the views that seemed to me quite incredible.

Though Tolstoy's suspiciousness and love of contradiction are easily aroused, there is yet a very wonderful charm about him, and I never met any one with such a capacity for encouraging, interesting, and stimulating other people. When he called at our house of an evening, our children were always interested and delighted, and they still remember his showing them how to make complicated paper birds that flap their wings.

Regretting the suppression by the Censor of many valuable articles he came upon in the course of his readings, Tolstoy and some of his friends formed the plan of getting out, month by month, a type-written magazine called *The Archive*, in which such articles could be reproduced. Only about a dozen copies of each number were typed, and they have since become extremely rare. I remember, one winter evening, hearing him read one of these articles. It was by a veterinary surgeon who had had a place under a Zémstvo, but had found the regulations, intended to prevent cattle disease, bear so hard on the peasants, that he resigned his post. The moral was, that to serve a Local Government is wrong. After the reading, discussion followed, and finally a young man and woman who had passed their examinations to become teachers in village schools, said that they still did not see what better course was open to them than to accept places under the Zémstvo, and teach village children. At this Tolstoy grew quite vehement in his indignation. 'God forgive me,' said he, 'I cannot

remain quiet when I hear you speak so! Here we have been reading N.'s article, and have agreed with his arguments point by point, and have seen clearly how Government oppresses the peasants—and now, at the end of it all, you calmly say that you intend to act just as though you had never heard a word of it!’

Part of Tolstoy's influence over us lay in his genius for expressing himself aptly, powerfully, clearly and humorously; and a large part lay also in the fact that he, and he alone, at that time dared and was able publicly and effectively to indict the *régime* of oppression against which we all fretted indignantly but impotently. There was yet another element in my own affection and admiration for him. I had left England when I was sixteen. Since then so much of my time and energy had been absorbed in earning my bread and butter that, till the time when I began to know him well, my outlook had been a narrow one, and I knew comparatively little of the movements of Russian life and thought. His writings and conversation came as something fresh and immensely inspiring. I stepped out into a world of new interests; and this happened just when the business I was managing had got into smooth water and was running so satisfactorily that I had more means and leisure than ever before, and was not so crushed by work as to be unable to respond to the stimulus. Then again, no sooner had I made his acquaintance than, through him, I began to get to know other interesting people. ‘To him that hath shall be given,’ and one acquaintance leads to another. Thus, one day in July, 1896, I received a note from Miss Jane Addams, of Hull House, Chicago, enclosing a letter of introduction from a friend, asking me to take her to see Tolstoy. She had recently undergone a serious operation, and her niece had brought her to Europe for change and rest.

Jane Addams comes of a sterling, earnest, democratic American stock. Her father was a friend of Lincoln's. When young she was laid up for years by illness, and it was



thought she would never be fit for active work ; but on gaining strength, she resolved, instead of marrying, or using her moderate income to secure for herself as much enjoyment as possible, to settle with a friend in a slum quarter of Chicago, and do what they could to help the poor, ignorant immigrants there. She was gifted with great capacity for organising, for reading character, and for fitting the work to the workers who came to help her ; and soon an important Settlement grew up around them, with many branches and offshoots. They have always worked with a minimum of rules, and Miss Addams has presided over her colleagues by the divine right of willingness and ability to do work others wish done, but have not equal capacity or opportunity for doing. This is not the place, nor am I competent, to tell of the nursing and visiting, the classes and baby-washing, the manual training, the bakery, the book-bindery, the restaurant, the lodging-house, or the collection of information, at Hull House.

I had little idea of all that work as I talked to my new acquaintances that hot summer day in Moscow. They had come to Russia chiefly in the hope of seeing Tolstoy, whose books, especially *What Then Must We Do?*, had impressed them greatly.

A day or two later, I gave myself a holiday from business (a very rare treat in those days, for my ideas of business duty were strongly developed) and as the leisurely train took several hours to do its 130 miles, we had a capital opportunity to supplement our previous conversations by a further comparison of Tolstoyan and Hull House economics before we reached the station from whence we drove to Yásnaya. One main difference between us—though I did not then sufficiently recognise it—was that Miss Addams had for years been bringing her theories and hopes to the test of experience and finding out how much she could accomplish ; while I was theorising and, without the ballast of experience to steady me, eagerly urging an extreme programme. I did not know how much I was learning, but

several things in my new friends' way of thinking and speaking impressed me then, and subsequently quite modified my opinions.

When we reached Yásnaya Polyána, we found that Tolstoy had gone to Toúla to meet an American visitor who had been staying with him, and who had promised to take some letters for him to Prince D. A. Hilkóf, then in banishment in a small town in the Baltic Provinces, where his postal correspondence was under supervision.

When Tolstoy returned, he welcomed us cordially, and good-humouredly related his afternoon's experiences. The young American—who (as some one else told us) had made himself very much at home during his stay at Yásnaya Polyána, deriding, among other things, Tolstoy's vegetarianism—had written saying he would reach Toúla station by a certain train, and asking Tolstoy to meet him there. Tolstoy went, hoping for a reply from Hilkóf, but only received back his own letters, opened and read by the Russian authorities! The bearer had considered it safest to take them to his ambassador (or consul) and inquire whether it would be correct for him to deliver them to the person to whom they were addressed. The authority in question had passed them on with the same inquiry to the Russian officials, who of course read them and refused permission. The young gentleman had now taken the opportunity afforded by the fact that he was travelling south, to return these letters to Tolstoy, and had even thought proper to make Tolstoy ride ten miles to Toúla to receive them!

It was a good test of Tolstoy's temper that he did not seem at all upset by the incident, though it increased the difficulty of future communications with Hilkóf. Tolstoy was then nearly sixty-eight, but neither his morning's literary work nor his twenty-mile ride had tired him, and he proposed to go for a bathe. We all walked together towards the little river that flows at some distance from the house. And now Tolstoy wanted to know about his visitors: where they had come from, what work they did, and what

their views were. As Miss Addams told him of Hull House, and of the condition of the immigrants who lived in that part of Chicago, he gently took hold of the loose, puffy silk shoulder of her fashionable dress, and smilingly asked, 'And what is this for?' Miss Addams smiled, and said the people she worked among liked to see her well dressed; to which he replied, 'You should not like to be dressed differently from them.' Miss Addams laughingly replied that the immigrants were of many nationalities—Irish, Italian, Greek, Armenian, and others—and that she could not dress in all their national costumes! To which Tolstoy made answer: 'All the more reason why you should choose some cheap and simple dress any of them could adopt, and not cut yourself off by your garments from those you wish to serve.' Between some people such a conversation might have been unpleasant, but there was not a shade of offence given or felt between these two. I do not think Miss Addams explained to him that it is part of her method to try not to shock the prejudices of those whose sons or daughters work at the Settlement, and that it is easier for her when well dressed to go among well-to-do people and interest them in the work, than it would be if, by adopting some special costume, she made herself conspicuous and announced that she is not as others are.

Following the path through the wood, we drew near the river. The ladies went one way, and Tolstoy took the rest of us to bathe from a wooden shed built on the edge of the stream. He swam well, being expert at that, as at all kinds of physical exercise. During that same visit he taught me how to ride a bicycle without holding the handle-bar.

When we got back, dinner was served in the open air, to a large party consisting of the Tolstoy family and visitors.

To Tolstoy, with his impulsive, strenuous nature, and his tendency to theorise, a method of reform which gains only a slow, partial, and at times questionable success makes little appeal. He wants a theoretic solution: clear, complete, and absolute! Jane Addams, on the other hand,

with her practical American character, had studied the actual conditions of the Chicago poor for years, effecting what ameliorations she could; convinced that each one of us can but contribute a little towards the building-up of the future city of God. As a compatriot of hers has said :

'The'ry thinks Fact a pretty thing,  
And wants the banns read right ensuin';  
But Fact won't nowadays wear the ring  
'Thout years o' setting up and wooin'.'

She had, I now feel sure, a much better perception of the next steps in progress than I, or even Tolstoy; and one might compare the difference between his methods and hers, with the difference between those of the English Social Democrats and the Fabians. Widely as his views contrast with those of the Social Democratic Party, they are alike in this respect, that both he and they start out with very wide and sweeping generalisations, arrived at in the study, and neither of them seem able to get effectively to work to carry out even those moderate social changes which should be quite feasible among us to-day. She on the other hand, like the Fabians (whom in this respect she resembles), while she likes to see to the bottom of the problem, is quite ready to plan, or adopt, even quite small improvements, provided they make in the right direction, and can now be tested in practice. As a result of this she succeeds in achieving considerable results, and does not mind if other people carry off the credit for them.

After she had left Russia, she wrote me a letter, in which she said :

The glimpse of Tolstoy has made a profound impression upon me—not so much by what he said, as the life, the gentleness, the Christianity in the soul of him. . . .

A radical stand such as Tolstoy has been able to make throws all such effort as that of Settlements into the ugly light of compromise and inefficiency—at least so it seemed to me—and

perhaps accounts for a certain defensive attitude I found in myself.

Our effort at Hull House has always been to seize upon the highest moral efforts we could find in the labour movement or elsewhere, and help them forward. To conserve the best which the community has achieved and push it forward along its own line when possible.

We have always held strongly to the doctrine of Non-Resistance, selecting the good in the neighbourhood and refraining from railing at the bad. Gradually I have come to believe even farther than that in Non-Resistance—that the expectation of opposition and martyrdom, the holding oneself in readiness for it, was in itself a sort of resistance and worked evil, or at best was merely negative.

No doubt a Christian who preached against the holding of private property would arouse much opposition on the part of the property-holders; he might give up his own in a way which would work as a constant source of irritation to them. But I can imagine the thing being done in a way which would make it merely incidental to the great wave of fellowship and joy which would swallow it—the coming of the spirit was so great an event to the followers in Jerusalem that the division of goods received but little comment.

So I would imagine the new social order (if it could come ideally) would gather to itself all that was best and noblest in the old, all the human endeavour which has been put into it in the right direction, and which has become sacred because it is so human and pathetic: that its joy and righteousness would sweep men into it.

The *ideal* is always admired; it is only when it begins to work itself out and to compromise with the world and circumstances that it becomes hated and misunderstood.

This is doubtless inevitable, but it is a great pity to consider the hate essential, to confuse the result which the imperfect presentation of the ideal makes upon men, with the effect which the ideal might have.

This belief has come to be part of my method of living, and I should have to start quite over again and admit the value of resistance if I gave it up. . . .

I am sure you will understand my saying that I got more of Tolstoy's philosophy from our conversations than I had gotten from his books. I believe so much of it that I am sorry to seem to differ so much.

I only knew later on, how much Tolstoy's views had influenced her. She returned to Chicago determined to do some hours of manual work each day in the bakery; but when she encountered the many urgent claims on her time and attention at Hull House, she felt that there would be something artificial in neglecting work for which nature had specially fitted her, in order to do what many others could do better than herself.

The curious thing about this visit was, that Tolstoy—who in 1882 had been so bent on persuading the Moscow well-to-do classes to undertake the care of the poor, destitute and down-trodden; and who, after the complete failure of his own efforts, had come to the conclusion that 'slumming' was no use, and that the salvation of society depends solely on individual regeneration and on standing aside from Governmental organisation—had now an opportunity of comparing notes with one of much greater experience in these matters than himself, and whose experience pointed to quite a different conclusion. Jane Addams had made a social experiment which had by no means totally failed, and her experience shows that 'slumming' may do good. Moreover, experience of the way in which the health and welfare of the poorest inhabitants suffer from municipal maladministration, had—quite against her own inclination—driven her, and Hull House generally, into politics: causing them to sacrifice their tranquillity to join in the struggle which eventually gave Chicago a clean city government. All this would have been supremely interesting to Tolstoy a few years earlier, but, at sixty-eight, he judged Jane Addams' work from the standpoint of his settled opinions, and her experience did not modify his view.

Jane Addams and her niece left by the midnight train, but I remained at Yásnaya for another couple of days, and had

some long walks and rides with Tolstoy. He told me of his own efforts to do right in money matters. At the time he was studying and writing on economics, and trying to be particularly strict with himself and to discard all luxurious habits, he had occasion to visit Prince Ouroúsof. On reaching the house he found that the Prince was away from home; but the head police-officer of the district happened to be there, and was exceedingly attentive and polite, offering his services and insisting on accompanying his 'Excellency' back to the station. It was 'Your Excellency' this, and 'Your Excellency' that, and there was no getting rid of the man. At the station he would not hear of allowing Tolstoy to procure his own ticket—he needs must get it for him, and inquired, 'What class is your Excellency pleased to travel?' with an air that seemed to say: 'Surely your Excellency requires at least a special car!' Tolstoy's good intentions were not proof against the strain. He felt that the shock to the police-officer's feelings would be too great if he said 'Third class,' and he had to compromise matters by saying 'Second class'!

When speaking of the simplification of life, Tolstoy once said to me: 'There is one thing I cannot do without—I must have a quiet room to work in.' This is a most reasonable and modest demand, but one that, like *any* demand, runs fundamentally counter to his teaching, that man must hold himself ready to yield up all he possesses to anybody who likes to take it.

Another story, told me by some one else, was that Tolstoy was once standing on the platform at the station when a lady, taking him for a peasant, called to him from the railway carriage to take a note to her husband, who had gone into the refreshment room while the train was waiting. Tolstoy delivered the note, and the lady gave him 15 copecks (3d.). A minute later some one came up and, in her hearing, addressed him as Count, and the lady learnt to her dismay that the peasant she had tipped was Count Tolstoy! She humbly apologised, and begged him to give

her back the 15 copecks; but he only laughed and said: 'No, no! That is money I have earned!'

They played lawn-tennis at Yásnaya on a rather rough sand court. Tolstoy played it merely as a recreation, not—as it is often played in England—as one of life's serious duties, and he is rather near-sighted; but the quickness of his movements was very remarkable, and he surprised me by winning the sets in which we were opposed, though I was in the habit of playing pretty frequently and played moderately well.

His favourite indoor game is chess, which he plays in what seems to me the best possible way. I do not mean that he could often beat a strong club player, but that he takes this game also just as recreation, and not as a study. He spends no time on chess literature, and willingly plays in a room full of people. To make a special study of chess would be impossible to a man with so many vivid and pressing interests in life. From lack of book-knowledge, he was often weak in the openings, but was sometimes very ingenious in snatching an advantage. In fact, in chess as in all things, he displayed originality and great alertness.

Like most people who came under his influence, I was violently swung from my former habits, and found it difficult to adjust myself to my new perceptions. For instance, on awakening to the immensity and urgency of the reforms which could be accomplished if we utilised our opportunities—from being a frequent attendant at the chess club, I forswore it as a luxury and waste of time. But it so happened that Lasker and Steinitz came to Moscow that winter, to play their match for the world's championship; and at Tolstoy's some one suggested that we should go to see them play. Tolstoy agreed, but I objected, on the score that professional chess, with its jealousies and bickerings and its diversion of ability to the service of a mere game, was contrary to the trend of his teaching. Without making any fuss about it, Tolstoy just said to the others: 'Do you know, I think I won't go. Maude, here, thinks it



would not be good.' I am now ashamed to have hindered his seeing a first-class example of a game he has always been fond of; but nearly every one who was swept into the strong current of his movement got things out of focus and proportion, at least for a while.

A booklet was issued at this time, from the printing-office of the Holy Synod, attacking and denouncing Tolstoy, and giving publicity to Father John of Cronstadt's opinion that he was mad. It was entitled, *Plody Outcheniya Gr. L. N. Tolstogo*. In Russian that title could either be read to mean: *Fruits of Count L. N. Tolstoy's Teaching*, or *Fruits of Teaching*, by L. N. Tolstoy (as though it were a companion volume to his *Fruits of Culture*), and it was actually sold everywhere by street-hawkers as a new work of his. In this way the Holy Synod's malignant insinuation reached the notice of many who never patronised its bookshops.

We were naturally very indignant; but when I mentioned the matter to Tolstoy, he merely smiled and said: 'Ah, they don't know that Pears' Soap would pay them £10,000 for such an advertisement!'

He reads English quite easily, and does not speak it badly; but when I tried to get him to talk English, he said: 'No, no! With you I'll talk Russian; when I talk English, I have to say not what I want to, but what I can.'

It was in 1896 that I first translated anything of his, and the piece I attempted was an extract from his Diary, which we called *The Demands of Love*. It appeared in the *Daily Chronicle*, and A. B. Walkley wrote an essay on it which, if I recollect right, is reprinted in his *Frames of Mind*. The first long article I translated was Tolstoy's *Letter on Non-Resistance* to E. H. Crosby.<sup>1</sup> I now wonder how I could have gone, word by word, through that letter, without detecting the flaw I now perceive in its argument; but so it was. In spite of the clue Jane Addams had given me, it was years before I got the Non-Resistant argument

<sup>1</sup> In *Essays and Letters*.

(as, I venture to hope, I have now done) into its true proportions.

Tolstoy's chief writings during 1896 were: his *Letter to the Liberals*,<sup>1</sup> definitely expressing his non-political attitude; *Patriotism and Peace*; *How to Read the Gospels*<sup>1</sup> (a leaflet I translated with great pleasure, and still believe to be very valuable); a *Letter to the Ministers of the Interior and of Justice*, protesting against the arrest and persecution of those who distributed his writings, and requesting that he (Tolstoy) and not his helpers, might be prosecuted; and finally an article entitled *The Approach of the End*, which deals with Van der Veer's refusal of army-service in Holland.

Part of Tolstoy's work that year was *The Christian Teaching*—an attempt to state his religious perception briefly, clearly, and systematically. It was, I think, at first intended for the Doukhobórs, but never reached as clear and simple a form as Tolstoy desired. In fact he never really finished it, though he consented (a year later) to its publication. It is valuable to students of his thought, but is one of the coldest and most didactic of his works, and has not had a wide circulation. He also, that year, wrote part of his novel, *Resurrection*, a book that has been more read (at any rate in England and America) than any other of his writings. The story, based on a case that came before the Law Courts and that was narrated to him by Senator Kóni, interested Tolstoy very much. At that time, however, he put it aside unfinished, having qualms of conscience as to the justifiability of spending time over a novel meant for educated readers, while the poor were still oppressed, and the blood of the righteous was still crying: How long, O Lord, how long?

Yet another book he then had on the stocks, was *What is Art?*, a work he had had in hand, off and on, for fifteen years, and which when it was at last completed was the best arranged, and most carefully thought-out,

<sup>1</sup> In *Essays and Letters*.

of all his didactic works. While writing it he had occasion to visit the theatres pretty frequently, a thing he had not done for many years, and also to read a large number of popular novels in various languages. He also, in 1896, went to Petersburg to visit a picture exhibition.

During the first quarter of 1897 I saw a great deal of Tolstoy and of some of his friends. I had then lived 1897 in Russia for twenty-three years, always looking forward to the time when I could retire from business and return to England, and that event was hastened by his influence. On the one hand, my wife and I came to feel that we could live on much less than we had formerly considered necessary; and on the other, his denunciations of existing conditions made me feel dissatisfied with the methods of even so clean and honest a business as the one in which I was engaged. Tolstoy's indictment of the whole industrial system is so scathing that, as it were, it wipes out the discrimination between better and worse businesses, and sets one comparing things as they are with things as they should be, rather than with things as we can make them. This I have ultimately come to consider an undesirable attitude of mind, but for some years it influenced me strongly. I returned to England soon after Tchertkóf had settled there, and, at Tolstoy's request and recommendation, allied myself with him and with the movement led by J. C. Kenworthy, whose writings Tolstoy much admired.

I was naturally anxious to see the practical application given to Tolstoy's views by the men he most commended. One had to live somehow, and he had, it seemed, proved all the ordinary ways of living—all property, laws, and government, as well as all landowning or hiring—to be immoral. What, then, should one do? Churches and Governments stood condemned because the actual results of their activity did not correspond with the aims they professed. The time had come to submit Tolstoy's teachings to the same test.

One could not imitate his own life. His roots are firmly fixed in a distant past, and only one with his antecedents and his genius could live as he does or do his work. As Dryden said of Shakespeare:

‘his magic cannot copied be,  
Within that circle none may walk but he.’

He had relegated all his public work to Tchertkóf, who in turn had handed over the English publication to the Brotherhood Publishing Company, and was himself taking up residence near the Brotherhood Colony at Purleigh, in Essex. It was with these people that I resolved to try my experiment in a new life, of which mention will be made in the next chapter.

The Third Pan-Russian Missionary Congress, held that year, pronounced Tolstoyism to be a well-defined and harmful sect. In coming to this conclusion, the missionaries were no doubt influenced by the Doukhobór troubles. But Tolstoyism was not a sect. Tolstoy has influenced many people, even to the point of causing them to change their way of life; but no sect of Tolstoyans exists anywhere among the Russian peasants, whose demands on life are much too definite and practical for that.

Following the proceedings at the Missionary Congress, Tolstoy received two threatening letters, which said that as his harmful activity had worn out the patience of members of the Church Militant, it had been decided to kill him on or before 3rd April 1898.

These threats disturbed the Countess, but had no effect on Tolstoy; nor, as a matter of fact, was any attempt actually made on his life.

Two events that occurred about this time may be mentioned, to illustrate his relations with the villagers.

The corpse of a baby was found in one of the lakes at Yásnaya, and suspicion fell upon a deformed widow who had been concealing her pregnancy, but who stoutly maintained her innocence. Tolstoy went out for a walk

one day, and returned much exhausted. It turned out that he had called on the widow, who as usual protested her innocence. Without cross-examining her, he merely remarked: 'If you are innocent of this child's death, you will not suffer; but if you are guilty it must now be very hard for you.'—'Ah, how hard it is!' exclaimed the woman, bursting into tears, and immediately confessed how she had strangled her baby and thrown it into the lake.

It happened that same summer that a girl in a neighbouring village had twins. Hearing of it, Tolstoy went at once to the hut where she and her two baby boys were lying. The girl's father was the poorest peasant in the place, and Tolstoy, after talking to him, gave him some money and promised him a horse to work his land with, and a cow.

Arbouzof, who tells the story, narrates that the girl exclaimed:

'God has sent you to us, or I should have smothered my babes and killed myself! Father and I are very poor, I have no mother, and now that this shame has come upon me, I do not know how to hold up my head!'

Tolstoy replied: 'You should not be ashamed or afraid before men, but before God. We are all men and sinners alike. It would have been a great crime, unfortunate girl, had you smothered your innocent babies, and you would have suffered terribly!'

On the way to Yásnaya, he told the father:

'Do not scold or reproach your daughter, but try to console her'; and on reaching home he told the Countess and the elder children of the affair, and they were very glad he had visited the girl. They gave the peasant a horse, a cow, some money, and cotton and linen stuff, and 160 lbs. of flour, and told him to come every month for flour. He burst into tears of joy, and fell at Tolstoy's feet—who said: 'You should never do that. Kneel and pray only to God, who will always send you His mercy. . . . Remember that I ask you not to scold your daughter!'—'God forbid,' replied the peasant, 'that I should scold her! I now have reason to rejoice in my grandchildren; but for them I should have

starved. It is ten years since I could afford a horse to till my land with, but now I have a horse, a cow, and all that I need! I am now the happiest of men. You, your Excellency, have had pity on us, and saved us!’

Tolstoy used often after that to go to chat with the peasant, and to see the daughter.

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Except in a few cases, I have tried to avoid repeating in this *Life* information already given in my former book on Tolstoy—which I believe to be very reliable for its facts, though it contains some opinions I no longer hold.

## CHAPTER XV

### EXCOMMUNICATION

[1897] *What is Art?* and the Censor. The argument. [1898] The Tolstoy movement in England. Purleigh Colony. The Doukhobórs. The Free Age Press. 'No Rights Reserved.' *Resurrection*. Success of the book. *Modern Science*. [1899] *Letter on the Hague Conference*. Marriage of daughter, Tatiána. [1900] Attack by the Holy Synod. The South African War. *The Slavery of Our Times*. Ill-health. [1901] Letter to Prince Vyázemsky. The Union of Russian Writers. Excommunication. The Countess replies. Popularity. Threatening letters. Tolstoy's *Reply*. *Appeal to the Tsar*.

DURING a stay in Russia in September 1897, I began the translation of *What is Art?* which Tolstoy thought  
1897 he had then nearly finished, but which he continued to alter, rearrange and rewrite for another six months. During the course of that work, I received many letters from him. In the first of them he mentions having written to ask Tchertkóf's consent to my translating the book.

While at work on it, I ventured to raise objections on various minor points, and found Tolstoy remarkably free from the irritability proverbially attributed to literary men. If my queries wearied him, he never let me feel it, though some of them were based on sheer ignorance of the matter in hand. In one letter he says: 'You ask my pardon, but I do not know how to excuse myself to you for the heavy labour you have taken on yourself and are executing so well.' And again:

You have quite correctly restored the words omitted on page 31, and your correction of the quotation from Spencer is also

right. I will make my version agree with yours. Altogether I see you are doing this translation with great attention, for which I am grateful. I am almost sure I shall agree with all your comments, but still send them to me: I too will consider each point carefully. . . .

I am now living alone in the country and enjoying the solitude. I have got to the end of my book, but as long as it is still in hand, I go on correcting and altering.

In another letter he says :

Your remark about page 14 has made me re-read it more carefully, and on reconsidering that passage, I have decided to omit the words. . . .

Thank you for sending news about yourself, but why so briefly? I want very much to know more in detail about you and your life, and about your wife and children. Tell the boys that I shall be very grateful to them if they will write to me. They are sure to write just what is most interesting: whom they play with—what people and what animals. . . .

A month later, in November, he wrote:

I begin by replying in sequence to your admirable and very useful remarks. . . .

With all the rest I am in agreement, and have made alterations in my text accordingly. Please send me more such. I am very sorry to have to disillusion you of the hope of soon finishing this heavy labour. There will be not twelve, but twenty chapters! It is true there are no more long ones, but after Chap. XI, about one-third of the whole is still left. . . . Thank Arnold and Bertie for their letters. All that they write—about the beans and the moles, and the astonishing animal—interests me very much. Do they work with the Colonists? It is good to get accustomed to work while one is young. It gives one strength, and tranquillity and independence.

And in December:

It is long since I wrote to you, dear friend, for I have been and still am going through much that is hard, I will not say bad for me, for it is in our power to turn evil into good; but



one is often not up to it. Also, yesterday we moved to Moscow, which depresses me so by its bustle and immorality. That is why I have been slow in sending you the last chapters, and the second version of XI, XII, and XIII. I have also had an unpleasant misunderstanding about the printing of the work in the magazine, *Philosophical Questions*.

After explaining what had happened, and what arrangements he intended to make, and when the English edition might appear, he adds:

Please do not raise difficulties, for I am so tired of the disagreements and unsatisfied demands there have been with regard to the publication of my works ever since I placed them at every one's disposal!

Again, on 16th December:

I continue to be heartily grateful to you for your work, for I sometimes hope the thoughts expressed in this book may prove useful. Yesterday I read Hammond's letter to St. John, and an article about your Colony in the *Northern Messenger*: and I felt so strong a wish to live working not only with my brain, but with my whole being—amid all the conditions of physical struggle, with weariness and fatigue and moral self-satisfaction and amiability—the struggle so necessary for life, and that constitutes real life, such as I have known and love, and such as shines in my memory like a bright star in a dark sky. May God help them [the Colonists].

In January he wrote:

Forgive me for being so long in replying, and for not sending  
 1898 you the corrected proofs. I have felt so weak lately  
 that I could not force myself to work. When I did,  
 I only spoilt things. I now send you the corrected chapters  
 from VI to XV inclusive.

Then came another letter, undated, saying:

I send you all the chapters in final proofs, except Chap. XX, which I hope to send in two days. . . . As you will see, I have again altered the sequence. I have not been quite well

all this time, and that is why I have made such confusion. Please forgive me.

And again :

I send you the last, the 20th chapter, and for the last time—if only you still have patience to continue the work, and if it is not already published. I have got so confused that I can't at all remember whether I have sent you the last version of Chaps. XIV to XIX.

Finally, in March, he wrote :

DEAR FRIEND,—I am very glad that the complete book will not be out for another month. That makes it possible for me to send you the fresh and *very important* alterations in Chaps. XI and XVI, which I send, availing myself of your amiability and long-suffering. I am very sorry that these alterations will not appear in the first edition. Here the number of *Philosophical Questions* in which the completion of the work was already printed, has been held back by the Censor and sent to the Spiritual Censor. That, I think, is equivalent to its complete prohibition. I regret the labour lost, but am glad of the opportunity to make, as I said, very important corrections. . . . I do not at once send you the alterations in some of the chapters, because it is all being set up in type (Sophia Andréyevna is having it set up, and still hopes to be allowed to print it). As soon as it is ready, in a couple of days, I will send you a proof with all the corrections, and will mark the places where, for the last time I hope, alterations have been made. . . .

What about the boys? Are you satisfied with them? When one brings children up at home, one must always remember that much seems bad in them merely because we (the parents) see it all and know both the bad and the good, which with school education we don't see. School education is the hypocrisy of education. All is disciplined, and externally seems good, and we are glad not to see the bad. It is the same with what is learnt at school. There they learn all that is necessary to give them an external polish, but the most essential knowledge is not touched on.

Eventually Tolstoy found himself obliged either to forgo publication of *What is Art?* in Russia altogether, or to consent to various alterations Professor Grot made in the book to meet the requirements of the Censor. In one of his letters to me he says :

You will of course pay no attention to the alterations made by Grot to suit the Censor.

As proof followed proof, each covered with fresh alterations omissions and additions often very illegibly written, it required the closest attention to keep the text right and to discriminate between changes made voluntarily, which I was to use, and changes made for the Censor, which I was to disregard. Ultimately, when at last the book was quite finished, my version was the only clear and reliable record that remained of Tolstoy's real intentions ; and he wrote a Preface for it in which he said :

This book of mine, *What is Art ?*, appears now for the first time in its true form. More than one edition has already been issued in Russia, but in each case it has been so mutilated by the Censor, that I request all who are interested in my views on art only to judge of them by the work in its present shape.

He then goes on for a couple of pages to tell how it had been treated, and says :

The Spiritual Censor—a priest who probably understands art and is interested in art as much as I understand or am interested in Church services, but who gets a good salary for destroying whatever is likely to displease his superiors—struck out all that seemed to him to endanger his position, and substituted his thoughts for mine wherever he considered it necessary to do so. . . After correcting the book in this way, the Spiritual Censor allowed it to be printed.

To protest in Russia is impossible—no newspaper would publish such a protest—and to withdraw my book from the magazine and place the editor in an awkward position with the public was also not possible

So the matter has remained. A book has appeared under my name, containing thoughts attributed to me which are not mine. . . .

I have also to mention that besides reinstating the parts excluded by the Censor from the Russian editions, other corrections and additions of importance have been made in this edition.

*What is Art?* contains the results of long consideration of the relation in which art stands to life as a whole. The ardour of Tolstoy's temperament and the strength of his likes and dislikes, make the book excellent reading, but have had the effect of sometimes diverting the attention of the critics from the fundamentally true and important things it contains, to particular instances about which their taste and his differed.

I have written rather fully on the subject in *Tolstoy and his Problems*, and will therefore here only deal with it briefly.

He points out that no satisfactory objective definition of beauty ever has been, or can be, given. Beauty means, 'that which pleases, not having personal advantage for its aim'; and what pleases us, depends on taste, and tastes differ. That being so, no profitable discussion of art can proceed from any definition which depends on the word 'beauty'; and we must seek a workable definition, to enable us to discriminate between art and not-art.

The definition Tolstoy offers serves the purpose admirably, and proves really workable. Art, he says, is a human activity by means of which man transmits to others, feelings he has experienced, and intentionally recalled in order to transmit. That definition covers all the arts: music, oratory, literary art, the drama, dancing, painting, drawing, and sculpture, as well as such minor arts as caricature, mimicry and decoration.

Being himself a great artist, Tolstoy naturally recognises and rejects the spurious imitations of art which attract attention otherwise than by transmitting feeling; and he

devotes a section of the book to telling of the ways in which art is counterfeited.

But granting that a certain work proceeds from a genuine feeling experienced by the artist, and is expressed with the technical skill essential for the successful transmission of feeling by external signs (colours, forms, arrangement of words or sounds, movements, etc.)—the question arises, Is the thing transmitted something we desire to have made prevalent? How discriminate between what is good and what is bad in the subject-matter of feeling, that art deals with? *What* feelings become prevalent, must make a great difference to the world; and what we desire or dread in that matter, will depend on our outlook on life, or as Tolstoy calls it, on our 'religious perception.'

For instance, at the present time there are in this country many people who would be delighted by a poem proclaiming our superiority to all other races, and pouring scorn, let us say, on the Germans or the Russians. A poem of that kind, written with the skill of a Kipling, might unquestionably be artistic in form, as well as acceptable—to these people—in subject-matter. But there would be others who might admit the excellence of the form, but would demur to the quality of the feeling. They would feel that the better the form of the poem, the greater the harm it would do by making the author's sentiment prevail.

Fletcher of Saltoun said: 'Let me make a nation's songs, and who will may make its laws.' He meant that Governments and laws rest ultimately on the minds and feelings of the people; and nothing (always excepting religion) so shapes and moves the minds and feelings of men, as works of art; and the better the form of the art, the more potent its effect. So that, ultimately, our laws and customs and manners depend, to a large extent, on the art prevalent among us—always shaping and influencing minds and characters, and 'laying in the souls of men the rails along which their actions will naturally run.'

That is why 'art is indispensable for the life and progress

towards well-being of individuals and of humanity'; and that is why art which is simple and clear and can reach multitudes, is of so much more importance to the human race than art which reaches only a few. It is no use telling us an orator has a wonderful gift of oratory, unless he really can move the crowds he speaks to.

Lowell, in his poem on Burns, is at one with Tolstoy in the belief that the fundamental feelings art deals with are present among all sorts and conditions of men :

‘All that hath been majestical  
In life or death, since time began,  
Is native in the simple heart of all,  
The angel heart of man.’

He is at one with him too in the lines :

‘It may be glorious to write  
Thoughts that shall glad the two or three  
High souls, like those far stars that come in sight  
Once in a century ;

‘But better far it is to speak  
One simple word, which now and then  
Shall waken their free nature in the weak  
And friendless sons of men ;

‘To write some earnest verse or line,  
Which, seeking not the praise of art,  
Shall make a clearer faith and manhood shine  
In the untutored heart.

‘He who doth this, in verse or prose,  
May be forgotten in his day,  
But surely shall be crowned at last with those  
Who live and speak for aye.’

But while Lowell speaks of such a writer as ‘seeking not the praise of art,’ Tolstoy maintains that it is just that—

what the original of Foker said to Thackeray about his lectures: 'I tell you what it is, Thack, you want a piano.' Mr. Maude wants the equivalent of a piano—some form of inviting advertisement, something to make Tolstoy 'go down.'

As a matter of fact, I had simply handed my work over to the Brotherhood Publishing Company, they having been nominated by Tchertkóf as publishers of Tolstoy's works. Since then I have paid more attention to such matters, and any volumes I myself have been free to dispose of, I have made a point of issuing through well-known firms, and I feel sure they have consequently reached more readers. *What is Art?* itself ultimately found its way into the Scott Library series, and has had a larger circulation in that form.

In the years 1897-8 it looked as though a strong Tolstoy movement was growing up in England; and it has often been asked why this disintegrated, and was succeeded by a period of general indifference. The fact, I think, is that some people were disappointed to find that the rejection of the ordinary ways of carrying on industry and business did not conduce to efficient or harmonious activity; while the more zealous partisans of the movement, reluctant to admit that there was a flaw somewhere in the teaching, preferred to lay the blame on one another. Quarrels were therefore frequent, and Kenworthy's eccentricities, which later on developed into insanity, helped to involve and embitter these disputes.

I cannot attempt to describe the Colony. After many disappointments its operations were summed up by one sympathiser in the words: 'There is more tomfoolery to the square yard in this movement, than in any other movement I have ever known.'

Partly owing to the strain it put upon men's minds, and partly because every strenuous movement attracts some ill-balanced people, there was much insanity at Purleigh. At least five of those who lived or stayed at the Colony while I was there, were subsequently put under medical supervision on account of their mental condition. Even

those of us who kept our sanity, did not always keep our tempers. We had undertaken a task perhaps too hard for any one, certainly too hard for us. No doubt we learnt much, but not without tribulation.

The failure of the Colony as an attempt to enable people to 'get out of the industrial system' and earn 'an honest living' (in contradistinction to ordinary industrial and commercial pursuits, which were regarded as dishonest) was a confirmation of the invariable experience of the Russian and other Tolstoy Colonies. We ought to have expected and been prepared for that result, and in fact both Tolstoy and Tchertkóf do avoid involving themselves in such undertakings, though they do not discourage other people from attempting them.

But there remained another, practical side to the movement: namely, the side Tolstoy had entrusted to Tchertkóf, which might still, perhaps, show a way of doing the world's work better than the customary methods practised in business, politics, and law.

That was really what we had set out to experiment upon! We had been greatly moved by Tolstoy, and were fully convinced (as I still am) that his own personal, individual work and influence, far from being a failure, are a great success; but apart from what he scored off his own bat, I wanted to see whether his principles conduced to a more harmonious and efficient organisation of human affairs. Slowly, reluctantly, and regretfully, I was forced to admit that they do not.

It is remarkable how seldom the reason for the failure of any movement that has really touched men's hearts, is told with lucidity. Who, for instance, has properly explained the Franciscan failure to regenerate the world?

It would be so useful to have records of the failure of sincere and earnest movements. Why are they so scarce? Partly because people prefer to tell of days full of hope, than of days full of dejection; and partly because the causes of failure are obscured by petty, personal conflicts, which



have no permanent value, and are not worth the trouble of unravelling or recording. Another cause is that the *odium theologicum* is not confined to the great Churches. As the highwayman demands your money or your life, so the religious zealot in every new movement demands your acceptance of his 'principles,' or he proceeds to wound your character by imputations of mean motives; and there is always a temptation to save oneself by running away, just as a prudent man avoids contact with a skunk.

But in spite of all this, I think those who have lived through a failure should gather up the results of their experience for the benefit of their successors. It costs us years of life to learn such lessons (though wiser heads learn them quicker) and if we may not teach what we have learned, it would seem that we have paid too high a price.

Let me then, as best I may, sum up what I learned in the Tolstoy movement.

Tolstoy's genius and saintliness caused many people, including many of more than average character and ability, to offer him help. But not wishing to be involved in the material cares of organising a movement himself, he advised these people to go and help Tchertkóf, who, as I have said, is a man of noble sentiments, high aims, and great enthusiasm. He is wealthy, accustomed to command, has a very strong will of his own, and—as we have already seen—holds the Tolstoyan views on property and government to their fullest theoretical extent.

The cause of the failure of our movement lay in the confusion which resulted from trying to combine a teaching of poverty, self-abnegation, and brotherhood, with an autocratic administration of large affairs, and the irresponsible power of one man.

This came out very plainly in connection with the Doukhobór Migration, though the story cannot be told without a good deal of preliminary explanation.

On 20th March 1898, Tolstoy had written me:

I am now quite engrossed in the affairs of the Doukhobórs,

who wish and are now permitted to emigrate. It is a great and very difficult affair.

In *A Peculiar People* I have dealt at length with that matter, which occupied so much of his time and attention during the next year or two; and I will here only recapitulate enough to explain the matter under consideration. The widespread nature of Tolstoy's influence, at that time, was shown by the ready response made to his appeal in Russia, Canada, the United States and elsewhere. It was as though an unseen brotherhood, reaching round the world, had suddenly made itself manifest.

The Russian whose experience, ability and character best fitted him, in my opinion, to direct the Migration of the Doukhobórs to Canada, and their settlement in that country, was Prince D. A. Hilkóf, who shares in a remarkable degree the organising capacity of his uncle, Prince Hilkóf, to whom the efficiency of the Siberian Railway is due. He was well acquainted with their system of agriculture, for he is himself an expert farmer, and had lodged among them in the Caucasus during one term of his banishment. On his release from exile he came to Purleigh, and his services were of great value to the movement, and would have been still more so, had it not been for an unfortunate quarrel between him and Tchertkóf.

On 1st October 1898, D. A. Hilkóf and I sailed from Liverpool for Canada. We had with us two Doukhobór families sent over as pioneers by their Community. The better to explain the situation, I must mention that we, and a number of other people, gave our services gratuitously; and all of us who were able to do so paid our own expenses. We considered ourselves members of a Brotherhood movement, in connection with which a very active and urgent collection of money was carried on by Tchertkóf for the Migration. It was unquestionably subscribed on the understanding that the Doukhobórs would be desirable and peaceful settlers in Canada, and would give no trouble pro-

vided their conscientious objection to military service was respected. We, all of us, when arranging for their Migration, assured the Canadians, and the Canadian Government, that the Doukhobórs were a reasonable and amenable people; and it was on the basis of those assurances that facilities were given which enabled 7363 of them to settle in Canada.

After my return home in December 1898, I received a letter from Tolstoy in reply to the reports I had sent him of the suitability of Canada for these settlers:

DEAR FRIEND MAUDE,—Thanks for your letter from New York. I think about you continually, and rejoice that you are our friend. I have to-day received a letter from Hilkóf, describing the position of affairs and the locations of the settlements. Thanks to you, it seems that all has been admirably arranged. I lately received a letter from Verigin and was struck by the justice of his judgment. He writes that he was almost *opposed to the migration*, thinking that to serve God and man, and shine with the light that is in us, is possible everywhere and under all circumstances, and that everything depends on how true we are to our faith, and that one can take one's frailties and passions and self-love with one even to Canada.

The episode with M. and I. [two Doukhobórs] of which you write, serves as an instance of this. I quite share your opinion that it would be well if they held to their brotherly unity. But it is not for me—living in the conditions I do—to advise it to others.

Herbert Archer has been here and I have made his acquaintance—which is the same as saying that I have learnt to love him.

I do not know what news to send you—or what you know and don't know. My son, Sergius, is at Batoum. Golitzin [the Viceroy] has not only not expelled him, but has been obliging to him. Sergius wishes to sail with the second steamer [the second of the four vessels chartered to convey the Doukhobórs to Canada]. In general, the undertaking seems to have got over the crest of its difficulties, and the road should now be downhill.

As for myself, I have been quite absorbed for a couple of

months past in my novel [*Resurrection*] which progresses, and of which I begin to see the end.

Concerning the Doukhobórs, I would point out that there are two contrary opinions often expressed about them, both tenaciously held and both wrong, yet both so clearly stated that those who try to explain the matter as it really is, are seldom listened to, because their story is necessarily involved.

One clear, wrong theory about the Doukhobórs is that which has been often expressed in Canadian, American and English newspapers: that they are degraded savages, objectionable and contemptible, besides being too stupid to appreciate the privileges Canada offers them. The contrary view, which is equally mistaken, represents them as highly enlightened, free from superstitions, and needing no Government because they are morally so much superior to the rest of mankind.

The complex truth is, that the Doukhobórs are a sober, hard-working, frugal folk, possessed of many good qualities, but hampered by a superstitious belief in the wisdom and power of their Leader, and a rooted distrust of all Governments except their own. Moreover, one Doukhobór differs from another, almost as much as Canadians or Englishmen do. Herbert P. Archer—the only Englishman who has managed to live among them (and he, not as one of themselves, but as schoolmaster)—says: 'We have been thinking of the Doukhobórs as a religious people. Really, as always, there are religious Doukhobórs—but not a religious Doukhobór sect. The sect, because it is a sect, is self-centred, self-righteous and intolerant.'

Tolstoy had written much in whole-hearted commendation of the Doukhobórs; and T'chertkóf, in *Christian Martyrdom in Russia*, had repeated this praise even more emphatically. The sect had been lauded to the skies, but after they reached Canada, it became evident that there was something seriously wrong. They themselves found it

very difficult to know how to manage their affairs, because Verigin was still in exile, and the Communal arrangements he had recommended to them differed from their former habits of life. They did not know whether they were all to form one Commune, or whether each village, or each group of villages, was to be a separate Commune. They also did not know in how far they might acknowledge the Canadian Government and obey its behests, without infringing their allegiance to Verigin. They would not admit outsiders to their sect; they objected to such simple regulations as the registration of births, deaths and marriages; and they quarrelled much among themselves.

To make matters worse, Tchertkóf, without consulting us (who had made ourselves morally responsible to the Canadian people for the good behaviour of the Doukhobórs) took it into his head, in 1901, to publish the letters Verigin had written in exile, and to circulate them among the Doukhobórs. The letters commended themselves to him by their strong Christian-anarchist tone; but he did not foresee that Verigin's devout followers would learn them by heart, and regard them as revelations, and that, in the following year, 1500 Doukhobórs would abandon their homes; let their cattle, horses and sheep go free; cease to 'spoil the earth' by cultivating it; decline to use anything made of metal, and would start eastwards on a pilgrimage to 'find Christ'—all as a result of this unfortunate publication.

Verigin neither desired nor encouraged the pilgrimage movement (which soon died down and was only sporadically renewed, after his arrival in Canada) and he was very much annoyed that his letters had been published and circulated among his people without his consent; but the mischief had been done before his release from Siberia.

Those who had been asked to regard the Doukhobórs as bright examples of exceptionally enlightened Christianity, were naturally puzzled by the Pilgrimage and by the Nudity Parades that succeeded it, and they looked for some

explanation—or at least for a frank admission that a mistake had been made. Nothing of the kind was, however, forthcoming either from Tolstoy or from Tchertkóf, but only reiterations of what was obviously a mistaken view.

To me personally, the whole occurrence was most instructive. In helping to arrange for that Migration, I came in contact with three different ways of doing business. I met representatives of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Sir Thomas Shaughnessy, R. B. Angus, and Archer Baker, who admittedly wanted to make their railway pay, but who did their work with great efficiency, and were ready to take the people at half the immigrant rate (over 2000 miles for \$6) knowing that the growth of an agricultural population made for future prosperity.

Then, in the Society of Friends (Quakers)—who were exceedingly generous in the help they gave to this sect, persecuted for refusing military service—I met a Committee of capable men, sparing a portion of their time and substance to aid, from religious motives, a people they had only recently heard of. Their work was more disinterested, but not quite so efficient; and finally there was our own Tolstoy movement, with the loftiest possible aspirations, but a performance only efficient when we forgot our 'principles,' and at other times ludicrously and pathetically inefficient!

The incident of the Verigin letters, which was not a solitary one (for other literature of a similar Christian-anarchist nature was printed and distributed among the Doukhobórs, in spite of protests from Archer and myself) raised the question whether we, who considered ourselves part of the Tolstoy movement, had any sort of control over—or any moral responsibility for—the conduct of the movement to which we were giving time and money; or whether we were mere pawns in the hands of a master.

It appeared to me that we were under an obvious public duty to those who subscribed funds, to the Canadian people and Government, and to the Doukhobórs themselves; and finally, as no one else undertook the task, I wrote and

published an article in which I stated the facts in as far as they were known to me at the time. That was in 1901.

Immediately after its appearance, H. P. Archer called on me with a letter he had received from Tchertkóf, who, to my surprise, enumerated four errors he said I had made, and announced that unless I withdrew them and apologised, he would cease all further intercourse with me! I was, of course, quite ready to correct and to express regret for my mistakes; but the points raised were minor ones, and on two of them I thought I had a good case. At any rate, it seemed to me that the accredited representative of a great moral teacher should not constitute himself accuser, witness, prosecutor, jury, judge and executioner all in one, nor should he refuse the accused an opportunity to be heard in his own defence. So I asked to be permitted to state my case. This request Tchertkóf refused to entertain, and though, in deference to Tolstoy's wish, I subsequently repeatedly expressed my readiness to make any apology, and do anything in my power to heal the breach, and though I have diligently sought for ways of taking the blame upon myself and facilitating a reconciliation, Tchertkóf and I have never met since that day.

I feel, in a way, grateful to him for the thoroughness with which he impressed upon me the unworkability of the Tolstoyan methods of doing business. It was instructive to see how completely a masterful man expressing Non-Resistant principles, can dominate a whole movement and deprive its adherents of any share in its management. Had Tchertkóf been less ardent and more considerate, some of us might have remained in doubt as to whether, after all, the new methods were not better than the customary ones; but to revert to autocracy, undiluted and unashamed, is simply to forget all the lessons of human experience and to revert to the starting point of human society.

I am afraid it is quite clear that the collapse of the Tolstoy movement was a result of the system—or the want of system—whichever one likes to call it; for no one will venture

to say that Tolstoy's chosen representative was a worse or less intelligent man than thousands of those who manage to organise all sorts of undertakings needing the co-operation and respect of large numbers of men. Nor can we attribute it to the badness of the many men with whom Tchertkóf came into collision: for the same fate befell us nearly all—including such different people as Prince D. A. Hilkóf (who had suffered imprisonment for the cause in Russia) and Van der Veer (imprisoned for refusal of military service in Holland) and A. C. Fifield (who gave up his post in order to work for the Free Age Press); and many others—good, bad and indifferent alike.

The root of the trouble was *lack of definiteness*. We started out as a Brotherhood, and stumbled on the fact that we were autocratically governed. We talked about the high moral principles of our movement, and found that things were being done which to some of us seemed obviously unfair. If any one was authorised to say what our 'principles' were, it was surely Tchertkóf; but within the course of a very few months we found him ardently collecting money; refusing to handle money; desiring to obtain money for *Resurrection*, and neglecting to account for the large sums that passed through his hands.

No one doubted his integrity, ardour, or ability; what one doubted was his common-sense, and the validity of his opinions.

We were quite willing to serve Tolstoy, but our devotion was not transferable, and when Tolstoy did not want it for himself it quickly dwindled away.

There was no one point on which it might not have been possible to rig up a plausible case for what was done; but when we compared what our movement was doing, with what was being done by other groups, it was impossible not to see that there was something wrong in our methods and 'principles.'

Sermon through and come to do, the Canadian Pacific Railway, or the Friends' Committee of the Meeting for



Sufferings, obviously did better work with less friction; and the really sad part of the Tolstoy movement was the terrible amount of quarrelling and the wreckage of human material that went on in it.

Three years later, in *A Peculiar People*, I had an opportunity to correct what mistakes I had discovered in my former article on the Doukhobórs, and, aided by Herbert P. Archer, to amplify, confirm and illustrate the view I had there expressed.

There was another matter which may also help to explain why the Tolstoy movement failed.

When it became evident that the Brotherhood Publishing Company was no good, Tchertkóf—who was already publishing Tolstoy's prohibited works in Russian—decided to start an English publishing firm, the Free Age Press.

In my view, what was most wanted here was a complete edition of Tolstoy's works, so rendered as not continually to remind the reader that he is reading a translation, and so issued as to be readily obtainable at our Free and Circulating Libraries, and bookshops; and I think the work should have been entrusted to some one to whom English was a native tongue. My chief criticism of the Free Age Press is that, instead of paying due attention to the quality of its versions, and delaying publication until that had been properly attended to, it made the great mistake of being in a hurry, and issuing inferior versions, which subsequently blocked the way for better translations.

Another mistake was that, instead of letting Tolstoy's works make their own appeal to English readers, the new edition appeared with much blowing of moral trumpets, and the announcement that:

The Free Age Press is an earnest effort to spread those deep convictions in which the noblest spirits of every age and race have believed—that man's true aim and happiness is 'unity in reason and love'; the realisation of the brotherhood of all men: that we must all strive to eradicate, each for himself, those false ideas, false feelings, and false desires—personal,

social, religious, economic—which alienate us from one another and produce nine-tenths of all human suffering.

Of these truly Christian and universally religious aspirations the writings of Leo Tolstoy are to-day perhaps the most definite expression, and it is to the production of very cheap editions of his extant religious, social and ethical works, together with much unpublished matter and his new writings, to which we have special access (being in close touch with Tolstoy), that we are at present confining ourselves. We earnestly trust that all who sympathise will continue to assist us by every means in their power, and help to make the publications yet more widely known. It is Tolstoy's desire that his books shall not be copyrighted, and as we share this view, all Free Age Press translations and editions (with one, as yet unavoidable, exception), are and will be issued free of copyright and may be reprinted by any one.

Tolstoy was not really responsible for all this—which is quite foreign to his own direct, simple style of addressing the public; but the Free Age Press insisted so much on identifying itself with Tolstoy, that the outside public could hardly escape the impression that this all proceeded from him, especially as he contributed a letter, written at the request of the Free Age Press and rewritten to meet their requirements, in which he said :

I also warmly sympathise with the announcement on your translations that no rights are reserved. Being well aware of all the extra sacrifices and practical difficulties that this involves for a publishing concern at the present day, I particularly desire to express my heartfelt gratitude to the translators and participators in your work, who, in generous compliance with my objection to copyright of any kind, thus help to render your English version of my writings absolutely free to all who may wish to make use of it.

Now, whatever our faults may be, we English are in general a practical people; and those connected with the book world knew pretty well that as long as the Free

Age Press had the *first right of publishing* Tolstoy's new writings, and published them in cheap paper-covered booklets at from one penny to sixpence each, there was not much point in having 'No Rights Reserved' printed on the title-page—for it was extremely improbable that any other publisher would ever care to reprint them. (As a matter of fact, when any firm—the Oxford Press, for instance—has issued any of them, it has preferred to procure better versions for itself.) In practice the thing has therefore been very much of a dead letter; except in one respect, which I may again illustrate by my own experience. I was at that time translating various articles gratuitously for the Free Age Press. As long as the copyright was mine I could expect to have control over the form in which the works were to be produced; and in case the Free Age Press failed, it would have been in my power to gather together my own and my wife's versions for the furtherance of an edition more nearly approaching my heart's desire. But the proclamation of 'No Rights Reserved' meant, in practice, that I should not in future be allowed to translate Tolstoy's new works unless I agreed to hand over my versions to the Free Age Press to do what it liked with. It was a curious illustration of the ease with which moralities which have no root in the customs and practice of a people, can be deftly turned inside-out. Tolstoy simply renounced his right to receive anything for his work, and never dreamed of interfering with his translators in France, Germany or elsewhere; but in England the Free Age Press, by a dexterous application of his 'principles,' snatched from translators who were anxious to be allowed to translate his new works, all control over the fruits of their labour. The ultimate result of this was that I ceased to work gratuitously, and did not afterwards translate for the Free Age Press except for pay.

I do not deny that a quite plausible case may be made out in favour of the Free Age Press policy. Had I been outvoted on a Committee, I should have submitted. What

galled me, was to figure as a member of a Brotherhood movement, which I knew to be really ruled by an irresponsible autocrat.

My experience of the movement cured me of any desire to work gratuitously—except when I want to get something done for which no one will pay. For I noticed that when Tolstoy refused to receive pay, the money often went into wrong pockets; and to get it well administered after he had declined it, was very difficult and often involved much friction. Other things being equal, the simplest way of doing a thing is the best; and that is why people, however unselfish, should generally accept pay for their work. They are then doing what their neighbours understand; and they can be as generous as they like afterwards, without creating confusion.

One reason why I did not feel convinced of the desirability of repudiating copyright before we had, at any rate, got the funds to complete the edition, was that there are so many other rules that might equally well be deduced from Tolstoy's teaching: as, for instance, the rule that no money should be used, or that no one should own the actual stock of books, etc. In fact, while proclaiming the Tolstoyan principle that property is robbery, Tchertkóf retained what people wanted, namely the right of first translation and publication, and the stock of books; and he gave away, very ostentatiously, what nobody wanted, namely the right to reproduce translations which were often very poor stuff.

One could not help reading a somewhat sinister meaning into the words 'No Rights Reserved,' when one saw how often the reader's right to a readable version (as well as, in some cases, the translator's right to due acknowledgment for his work) was disregarded.

Of the quality of the Free Age Press versions I will speak in more detail in an Appendix. My general comment on that firm's work is, that while aiming at new and unusual virtues, it has heretofore neglected the ordinary virtue of doing its own work conscientiously.

I have, however, again been drawn away from the chronological sequence of my story, which has not yet reached the time when the Free Age Press was first started.

On 24th December 1898, Tolstoy wrote me a letter in reply to one in which I mentioned having met W. D. Howells in New York :

I have just received your second letter, from the steamer, in which you write me about Howells and the others. I feel particularly sympathetic towards Howells, from all I know of him.

What do you know and think of the Christian Commonwealth? [A sort of Tolstoy Colony, in America, which failed speedily and completely.] That society interests me very much. The longer I live, the more convinced I am that our excessive mental development is a hindrance to us. My son once asked a peasant why he had ceased to live with a neighbouring proprietor. The peasant replied : ' One can't live with him. '—' Why not ? '—' Because he 's too awful wise ! ' How simply and easily the Doukhobórs attain to what seems to us, with our wisdom and erudition, unattainable !

I fear that that is also where the obstacle to the attainment of the Christian Commonwealth's aim will lie. In the last number of their paper, I read a discussion to the effect that patriotism may be good. That is sad.

Tchertkóf writes that he does not wish to, and cannot, attend further to the affairs of the Doukhobórs, part of which consists of the publication and sale of the translations of my novel . . . so we are obliged to place all our hopes on you. Ashamed as I am to ask you to take on yourself a new task, after you have just finished your labour for the common cause, I cannot do otherwise. If you agree, I will do all I can from here to relieve you of all unavoidable work. . . . So then, dear friend, please do not refuse to help us, and reply soon, to set our minds at rest.

I regret to say that I did not immediately undertake the work Tolstoy offered me. I ought to have done so out of gratitude to him ; but I dreaded difficulties with Tchertkóf,

whose abstention from business I had a presentiment would not prove permanent.

Some time later, Mrs. Tchertkóf wrote saying that the burden was falling upon her, and was beyond her strength, and begging my wife to relieve her of it. As the latter was translating *Resurrection*, I finally agreed to attend to its publication, after receiving a promise that Tchertkóf would not interfere, and on the understanding that my wife should be free to copyright her translation.

Letters must have crossed in the post, for the next one from Tolstoy was evidently written before receiving my reply to his previous communication :

I have received your letter of 31 December, kind friend Maude, and am very glad you are again in England and wish to work at translating my writings. I do not wish for a better translator, both as to your knowledge of the two languages, and your reliability in all affairs.

I am now in the country, probably till 8 January. Unfortunately I not only have not been able to finish the last chapter of *Resurrection*, as I had hoped, but I have been so unwell lately with pains in the back and feverishness, that I have not replied to letters. To-day, 30 December old style, I am better and am writing letters, and to-morrow I hope to get properly to work and finish ; and then shall start revising it and send off the final version to Marx.

At my request, I yesterday received proofs showing the omissions made by the editor of the *Niva* to suit the Censor. Much has been struck out, and this is all the better for the foreign editions.

Good-bye for the present. Friendly greetings to you and your family.

His next letter says :

DEAR FRIEND,—I have received all three of your letters. I much regret your refusal to take part in the business of publishing the translation of *Resurrection*, though I understand its motives. In this whole business there is some- 1899  
thing indefinite, confused, and *seemingly* discordant with the

principles we profess. Sometimes, in bad moments, this acts on me too, and I wish to get rid of the affair as quickly as I can ; but when I am in a good, serious frame of mind I am even glad of the unpleasantness bound up with it. I know that my motives were, if not good, at least quite innocent ; and therefore, if in men's eyes it makes me appear inconsistent or even something worse, it is all good for me, teaching me to act quite independently of men's judgment, and in accord only with conscience. One should prize such experiences. They are rare, and very useful. . . .

I am very glad that your kind wife is making the translation of *Resurrection*. I am now sending another seventeen chapters. There are five more which I will send in a few days in MS. I will begin to send the finally corrected proofs when I have corrected the last five chapters. The work goes slower than I anticipated, because I have been ailing all this winter—back-aches and general weakness.

The publication of the book, and Tolstoy's revision of it, lasted the whole of that year. Ultimately the state of his health obliged him to hasten its completion, which partly accounts for the fact that the last part of the book is decidedly inferior to the commencement.

When the work was drawing to its close, and Tolstoy, fagged out with the distasteful task of correcting the weekly instalment of proofs by a fixed date, was approaching the severe illness that announced itself by an acute attack on 24th December 1899, he wrote to a friend :

" I am much absorbed in my work. And regularly, as soon as I see the proof-sheets from Marx, I feel sick and have pain. . . . I am so occupied with writing the book that I spend my whole strength on it. Other movements of the soul go on within me ; and, thank God, I see the light, and see it more and more. More and more often I feel myself not the master of my life, but a labourer. . . .

In *Tolstoy and his Problems* there is a chapter on 'How *Resurrection* was written,' to which I refer readers interested in the matter. Here let it suffice to say that it

was to find funds to help the Doukhobór Migration, that Tolstoy resolved to complete the novel he had so long had in hand.

He sold the right of first publication to the Petersburg paper *Níva* for Rs. 12,000; but (in spite of the fact that the Censor cut out a good deal—in one place practically a whole chapter) the book grew so much longer while under revision, that Marx, the editor of the paper, voluntarily added another Rs. 10,000. Thus about £2350 in all was received for the Russian original.

Availing themselves of Tolstoy's repudiation of copyright, other Russian newspapers began to reprint the weekly instalments of the story as they appeared. Marx naturally objected; and eventually Tolstoy appealed to them not to reprint before publication in the *Níva* was completed; and they all complied with his request.

The incident illustrates one of the objections to the repudiation of copyright in the original of a new novel for which there is a large demand, and for which the author wants money—however unselfishly.

The publisher in such a case may reasonably say to the author: 'What you want me to undertake is more of a gambling transaction than a fair business risk. If you want me to pay you, why not give me what I want for my money, namely, rights in the book? If you consider it wise to throw the book for publishers to scramble for, do so; but why ask one of us to pay you for what others may have next day for nothing? If your announcement is understood to mean that a new and saleable novel is to be had for the grabbing, it constitutes an invitation to competition, and will needlessly cause work to be spent in hastily setting up rival editions. The start you offer to one of us in first publication, will be counterbalanced by a heavier printer's bill, since you will go on making alterations until the book is out, when our rivals will have clean copy to print from, almost for nothing.'

Tolstoy has often mentioned the trouble and annoyance



he has experienced over the publication of each new book he has written since he adopted his self-denying ordinance; and while heartily respecting the altruism of his motives, I cannot help thinking that (since regulations are made for man and not man for regulations) the trouble and annoyance he has had may be taken as an indication that the rule is not altogether a wise one.

The novel itself, which appeared when Tolstoy was over seventy, shows the same vigorous command of his art that *War and Peace* had done more than thirty years before; but unlike that novel or *Anna Karénina*, it is not a book primarily written to please, but one which deliberately aims at infecting the reader with the author's sympathies and antipathies. It would have been impossible for Tolstoy to suppress his feelings; they ooze out at every pore; but because they ooze out naturally, the work retains its full artistic quality in spite of its didactic intent.

Only on one point does *Resurrection* betray the seeking, unsatisfied feeling which lurked in the philosophy of the earlier novels: at the end we feel that Tolstoy does not know what his hero, Nehlúdob, is to do with himself. Had Nehlúdob been an author, Tolstoy could have settled him down on some country estate, and let him write books, simplify his life, and learn self-control and self-abnegation. But Nehlúdob is a man of action—and what is a Tolstoyan man of action to do? Of necessity the book ends where its hero—after seeing the evils of army-service and civil service, of Court life, society, the Church and the law—reads the Sermon on the Mount, notes the injunction not to resist him that is evil, and begins a new life.

One would dearly like to know what that 'new life' was like. But after all, one does not go to a mine to find what is not in it, but to gather the gold it contains; and *Resurrection* is truly a wonderful book, extraordinarily truthful in its descriptions of Russian life; shedding a flood of light on evils to which custom has rendered us callous; instinct with high purpose, and pregnant with the

mature wisdom of a great and good man. There is hardly any subject of social interest it does not touch upon, and in particular it has undoubtedly moved men, in many lands, to consider the evils of prison life and of the convict system.

I will not tell its story ; for it is a book not to read about, but to read. It is probably as strenuously moral a novel as was ever written, but in dealing with amatory matters it is as plain-spoken as the Bible itself ; and for a while Mudie's Library and W. H. Smith's bookstalls boycotted it as immoral. When, however, a dramatised version was staged at His Majesty's Theatre, the demand became very large, and they pocketed their scruples.

Tolstoy said he was very glad he never had to witness a performance of a dramatised version of any of his novels ; for he holds that each form of art has its own suitable matter, and that subjects suitable for novels are usually by their nature quite unsuited for the stage.

In England and America the book has had a larger sale than any other work of Tolstoy's ; and, in spite of the appearance of several unauthorised versions, and the failure of one of its publishers, the authorised English translation has brought in about £2700.

Neither Tolstoy nor my wife accepted any part of the proceeds, which went in aid of the Doukhobórs at first, and, after they were settled in Canada and their financial affairs had passed into Verigin's control, a Committee (consisting at present of J. F. Green, G. H. Perris, and myself) was appointed to administer what remained of the Fund, for various other public purposes.

Among short articles written by Tolstoy in 1898, was a Preface to a translation his eldest son, Count Sergius Tolstoy, made of Edward Carpenter's *Modern Science*, which Tolstoy admires very much.

Though during the whole of 1899 he was busily engaged on *Resurrection*, he yet found time to write a number of those letter-essays of which in later life he has been so

prolific. The most remarkable of that year's epistles was the *Letter on the Hague Conference*.

The appeal sent out to the nations by the young Tsar, Nicholas II, to consider the question of the reduction of armaments or other mitigations of war, delighted most of the friends of peace; but Tolstoy poured fierce scorn on the whole affair, maintaining that the Conference could be nothing but an hypocritical arrangement, aiming not at peace, but at hiding from men the only path by which peace can be attained. He declared that Governments never can or will diminish their armaments; but that 'armies will first diminish and then disappear, when public opinion brands with contempt those who, whether from fear or for advantage, sell their liberty and enter the ranks of those murderers called soldiers.' Not the reformation of Government, but the utter rejection of Government, has been his line persistently, and it was never expressed more harshly, or, I am tempted to add, more *malapropos* than on this occasion.

On 14th November 1899, his eldest daughter, Tatiána, married Mr. M. S. Soohoteén [Suhotin, in the transliteration adopted in this book]. His second daughter, Mary, had married Prince N. L. Obolénsky two years previously (in June 1897).

On 5th April 1900, when his health was known to be in a critical condition, the Most Holy Synod sent out a 'confidential' Circular to the clergy, informing them that 'Count Leo Tolstoy in his writings on religion has plainly shown himself an enemy of the Orthodox Christian Church. He does not acknowledge the One God in Three Persons; the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God, he speaks of as a mere man; he refers blasphemously to the mystery of the Incarnation of God the Word; perverts the holy text of the Gospels; disparages the Holy Church, calling it a human institution; denies the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and mocks at the holy sacraments and rites of the Holy Orthodox Church. . . .

Therefore the Most Holy Synod decrees that the performance of requiems, masses, and liturgies for the repose of Count Leo Tolstoy's soul, in the event of his dying unrepentant, be forbidden.'

This was preliminary to the more famous public decree issued the following year. Being a secret document, the Circular caused no great commotion, even when its contents leaked out and appeared in the foreign press.

At the commencement of that year, I had written asking Tolstoy about an interview that appeared in the papers, attributing anti-English views to him in connection with the war in South Africa. He replied in January :

Of course I could not have said, and did not say, what is attributed to me. What really took place was this: A newspaper correspondent came to me as an author wishing to present me with a copy of his book. In answering a question of his as to my attitude towards the war, I mentioned that I had been shocked to catch myself, during my illness, wishing to find news of Boer successes, and that I was therefore glad to have an opportunity, in a letter to V., to express my real attitude towards that matter—which is, that I cannot sympathise with any military achievements, not even with a David opposed to ten Goliaths, but that I sympathise only with those who destroy the cause of war: the prestige of gold, of wealth, of military glory, and above all (the cause of all the evil) the prestige of patriotism, with its pseudo-justification of the murder of our brother men.

Of course I do not think it is worth while publishing in the papers a contradiction of the opinions falsely attributed to me. You cannot wish good health to every one who sneezes [a Russian proverb, arising from the custom of wishing good health to any one who sneezes]; for instance, I have been receiving letters from America lately, some reproaching and others approving of me for having discarded all my convictions! Is it worth while denying such reports, when to-morrow more such items of news can be invented to fill the columns of the newspapers and the pockets of the editors? However, act as you consider necessary.

My health has not been good all this time ; but as, in order to die, there is but one way, namely by being ill—just as in order to move from one place to another there is no way except to get into a carriage or a railway car—I do not object to my illness, especially as it is not painful, and allows me to think and even to work. I am now chiefly occupied with an article on the Labour Question. I have already written on that subject, but it seems to me that I have something new to say, and I hope to say it simply and clearly.

The book referred to was *The Slavery of Our Times*, a sequel (but to my mind a disappointing one) to *What Then Must We Do?* The former work left us in some doubt about the solution of the problem of poverty, but it dealt with realities, and was vivid and moving. *The Slavery of Our Times* is more abstract, and though it gives a definite reply, that reply is 'Non-Resistance'—abstention from all share in Governmental activity. This has been the main theme of Tolstoy's writings during the last ten years. I have already indicated my own attitude towards it, and do not think I need reiterate my views either here or when mentioning his subsequent writings on that theme.

When translating *The Slavery of Our Times*, I wrote an Introduction to it, and in that connection received (before our rupture) an interesting letter from Tchertkóf which showed to what an extent, even then, he and I were travelling different roads. My anxiety was lest the value and truth latent in Tolstoy's message should be lost sight of owing to the intransigence of his attitude. Tchertkóf's feeling—a genuine one, for which I feel a certain respect even while I differ—was of quite another kind. I had said : 'To shake ourselves completely free from all share in violence is not possible. Tolstoy himself does not profess to have ceased to use postage stamps which are issued, and the highway that is maintained, by a Government which collects taxes by force ; but reforms come by men doing what they can, not what they can't.' In his friendly re-

monstrance, Tchertkóf asked me to substitute (as I did) the words 'very difficult' for the words 'not possible'; and he went on to say of the use of stamps and roads: 'What if that is precisely where Tolstoy is inconsistent in his life, as for my part, I *do* believe it is?'

My view is that Tolstoy's teaching of Non-Resistance does not act, because it is one-sided, and not really true to the facts of life. Tchertkóf thinks that any lack of success it may have had, results from Tolstoy's not going far enough! It is really an indication of, and a tribute to, the force and reach of Tolstoy's magnetism, that it should, even for a time, have swept two men of such different natures as Tchertkóf and myself into one net.

In reply to a letter in which I told him that the Purleigh Colony was breaking up, Tolstoy wrote me, on 15th December 1899, as follows:

Forgive me for being so long in replying to your interesting letter. At first I put it off because I was busy, and then I felt ill, and I am still very weak.

The failure of life in the Colony, about which you write, is only an indication that the form of life which was chosen by the Colonists for the realisation of their spiritual needs was not adequate. When a definite inner content exists in man, it finds for itself a corresponding form—generally unconsciously, *i.e.* when one is not thinking about the form, and when the form is not defined in words.

About *Resurrection* and its translation . . . all that money business which I undertook, and of which I now repent, has been so tormentingly painful, that now that it is over I have decided to have nothing more to do with the matter, but to return completely to my former attitude towards the publication of my writings: that is, while letting others do as they please with them, to stand quite aside from the business myself.

In the spring of 1900 he wrote, in reply to a letter in which I had put some inquiry about his views on taxation:

As to the relation, I do not say of a Christian, but simply of

a reasonable man to taxes, there can be no question. In that respect, as with all demands to participate in governmental crimes, a Christian cannot fail to try to free himself from such participation. The degree to which he will be able to free himself, will depend on the difference between the strength of the temptations by which he is ensnared and the strength of his convictions. . . .

I too have a very hazy conception of the spiritual physiognomy of H. One cannot be a Christian a little, or with reservation. *He that is not with us is against us.*

There, you see how dull and matter-of-fact this letter is! I am pressed for time. But that does not mean that apart from business I have not a sincerely friendly feeling towards you.

I always rather dreaded in Tolstoy the all-or-nothing note that occurs in the above letter. To my own mind things and people are generally not altogether good or bad, but more or less good or bad as the case may be.

In another letter he refers to his health, which was beginning to give very serious anxiety to his family and friends:

3 August 1900.

DEAR MAUDE,—I write to you not with my own hand, because I have been for some time ill with my customary, very weakening illness. I received your letter enclosing one from Percy Redfern,<sup>1</sup> which pleased me very much by its ardour and sincerity. Ask him to excuse my not replying to him, and convey to him, what I wish to most of my young friends: namely that they should devote their energy more to the ordering of their inner spiritual being, than to propaganda.

I received your pamphlet, 'Tolstoy's Teaching' [now called, *Leo Tolstoy: a Short Biography*] and approved of it very much. It is admirably constructed, and gives what is most essential.

<sup>1</sup> The most active member of a Manchester group interested in Tolstoy. Redfern's book, entitled *Tolstoy: a Study*, is very thoughtfully written, and well worth the attention of those interested in Tolstoy's philosophy. Another English writer who has written about Tolstoy with sympathetic insight, is G. H. Perris.

Your article on *What is Art?* pleased me exceedingly, so clearly and powerfully is the fundamental thought expressed.

Tolstoy's state of health long remained very unsatisfactory, and in spite of his wonderful perseverance and tenacity his work was frequently interrupted. Mention of this occurs in a letter he sent me on 23rd November 1900:

Before moving to Moscow, I visited my daughter Tánya in the country, and there had influenza or something of that kind; at any rate, since then for more than a month I have felt very weak, and disinclined to work. At first this distressed me, but now I begin to get accustomed to it. One can also learn to live without mental activity, if only one's moral activity does not cease, and that is what I aim at with more or less success.

As the months wore on, his state of health became more and more critical, and on 18th January 1901, he wrote:

I was quite unwell, kind friend Maude, when I asked P. A. to write to you for me. Now I am better, and add these lines to say a few more words. My illness consisted of suppressed feverishness, causing great weakness and at times intensifying my usual liver disease. 1901

When I am in a good spiritual state, I am glad of my approaching liberation from the body. But when I am carried away by my wish to do things I have planned, I regret my lack of strength.

In February 1901, my conflict with the Free Age Press still continuing, Tolstoy wrote definitely taking Tchertkóf's side, but treating me with the kindly consideration which, with age, has become so increasingly noticeable a feature in one who was by nature both impulsive and masterful:

Moscow, 19 Feb. 1901.

DEAR FRIEND MAUDE,—Of course I much regret that you and Tchertkóf have not come to agreement about translating and publishing, but I am distressed most of all that such people as you and he, both living not for your personal ends but to accomplish the work we are sent to do, have not found the



common principle which would unite you on the present question. The considerations which you advance against the Free Age Press, and in favour of copyright, are just; but so is the consideration that the manner of publishing should accord with the bases which are preached in the editions. And I think that the latter argument is more important than the former. I think that if you do not agree to that, then your and your wife's beautiful translations of works that have been already published in bad translations, deserve to find a publisher. If not, still what you have in view to do [namely to try to explain his views in my own words] is very pleasant to me.

My relation to that business is this: Tchertkóf has spent, and continues to spend, so much loving work on the correct reproduction and dissemination of my thoughts, which he fully and very sensitively understands, that I can only rejoice at having such an intermediary between myself and my readers. And the chief thing for me is, that after all the labour he has spent, I cannot disappoint his expectations and, instead of aiding him, hinder his work. My help in his work is limited to the fact that all my new writings (if there are any more) I issue first of all through him, letting everybody, if they care to, make use of them afterwards as they please.

I am very sorry that I and Tchertkóf should lose your and your wife's help, which is very valuable—both on account of your knowledge of the languages, your conscientious work, and the unity of our understanding of life; but what most of all grieves me is that perhaps I, by my inaccuracy and alterations, have been the cause of the dislike you have taken to this work. Please forgive me for that. Above all, do not attribute importance to this affair, and do not let dead business impair living intercourse with living people. I press your and your wife's hands in friendship.

His next letter dealt with the same subject, again with the same friendly forbearance:

*22 March 1901.*

DEAR FRIEND MAUDE,—I have received your letter and am glad you have taken my letter in so good a spirit. Really it is not worth while for the sake of any business, and still less for self-love, to deprive oneself of intercourse with one's fellows, and

especially with those with whom we are at one on the most important and essential things in life.

In a letter received 25th March 1901, he says :

DEAR FRIEND,—I have received your good letter.

All the same I regret, not that you do not work with Tchertkóf, but that between you and him there is an unkindly feeling, and on your side a feeling of personal dignity bordering upon pride. But it is not for me to judge you.

As to the money your wife wishes to give for useful work, [*Resurrection* Fund] I have no advice to give. The Doukhobórs, thank God, are well off in Canada, and I think there is no particular need in Yakoútsk ; and there is money put aside to assist the exiles there, which is not wanted as yet. There is some also for the migration of the women. So deal with the money as God puts in your heart.—Your loving

L. Tolstoy.

These letters show Tolstoy's kindly spirit at a time of great stress, for the beginning of the year 1901 was the moment, in Russia, at which the long smouldering feelings of dissatisfaction began to express themselves publicly, and the cry of patriotism and loyalty no longer sufficed to repress demonstrations of sympathy with the reform movement. Several indications of this feeling appeared simultaneously. It showed itself among the members of the *Zémstvos* who met in Moscow, in February and March, at the Congress of Agronomists and at that of the *Maréchaux de la Noblesse* ; and it showed itself also in the students' disturbances when, for the first time, the butchers in the streets near the Moscow University refrained from showing hostility to the insubordinate students. The Government met the unrest in the Universities by issuing 'temporary regulations,' under which students participating in the disorders could be sent to serve as soldiers. Some dozens of Kief University undergraduates were actually sentenced to the ranks under these 'temporary regulations,' and this evoked many public protests, especially from the other Universities. A large demonstration took place in the square in front of the Kazán

Cathedral in Petersburg, on 4th March, during which Kleigels, Governor of Petersburg, ordered the Cossacks to charge and beat the crowd. N. F. Ánnensky, the author, was among those who were struck, and P. B. Struve, the publicist, was among those arrested. This called forth the energetic protest of several well-known men, and in particular of Prince L. D. Vyázemsky, who was on the spot.

The Tsar reprimanded Vyázemsky for his interference, and Tolstoy thereupon drafted the following address to the Prince, which was signed by many eminent people :

RESPECTED PRINCE LEONÍD DMÍTRIEVITCH !

Your courageous, noble and humane action on 4 March, in front of the Kazán Cathedral, is known to all Russia.

We hope that you, like ourselves, regard the reproof you have received from the Emperor for that action as merely due to the coarseness and cruelty of those who deceive him. You have done a good deed, and Russian society will always remain grateful to you for it.

You preferred to yield to your feeling of indignation against brutal violence, and to the demands of humanity, rather than to the supposed demands of propriety and of your position ; and your action evokes universal respect and gratitude, which we express to you by this letter.

The Union of Russian Writers held a General Meeting on 9th March, and unanimously passed a resolution to address a protest to the Minister of the Interior, concerning the action taken by Kleigels on the Kazán Square, and against the edict which caused the demonstration. In reply to this, on 12th March, the Union of Russian Writers was dissolved by the Minister of the Interior ; and Tolstoy promptly signed an address of sympathy and approval to P. I. Weinberg, the President of the suppressed Union.

Amid these events, indicating the awakening of that new life which four years later shook the throne of Russia, the Holy Synod, as though to show what spirit actuated it at the commencement of the twentieth century, surprised the world by launching against Tolstoy what was generally

taken to be a decree of Excommunication. It was dated 22nd February 1901, and after a preliminary reminder of the fact that 'the gates of Hell shall not prevail against' the Holy Church, it went on to say:

In our days, God has permitted a new false teacher to appear—Count Leo Tolstoy. A writer well known to the world, Russian by birth, Orthodox by baptism and education, Count Tolstoy, under the seduction of his intellectual pride, has insolently risen against the Lord and His Christ and against His holy heritage, and has publicly, in the sight of all men, repudiated the Orthodox Mother Church, which reared and educated him, and has devoted his literary activity, and the talent given to him by God, to disseminating among the people teachings repugnant to Christ and the Church, and to destroying in the minds and hearts of men their national faith, the Orthodox faith, which has been confirmed by the universe, and in which our forefathers lived and were saved, and to which till now Holy Russia has held and in which it has been strong.

After recounting Tolstoy's heresies at considerable length, it proceeded to say:

Therefore the Church does not reckon him as its member, and cannot so reckon him, until he repents and resumes his communion with her. To this we bear witness to-day before the whole Church, for the confirmation of the faithful and the reproof of those who have gone astray, especially for the fresh reproof of Count Tolstoy himself. Many of those near to him, retaining their faith, reflect with sorrow that he, at the end of his days, remains without faith in God and in our Lord and Saviour, having rejected the blessings and prayers of the Church and all communion with her.

The Countess at once wrote to the Procurator of the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Bishop Antonius a letter, dated 26th February 1901, in which she said:

When I see this excommunication pronounced by the Church to which I belong, and to which I shall always belong, established by Christ, in order to hallow in God's name the solemn

acts of man's life: birth, marriage and death; whose mission is to proclaim the law of charity, the remission of sins, love of our enemies and of those that hate us; whose duty towards all is to pray for all: then I am at a loss to understand! This excommunication will call forth not the approval, but the indignation, of men, and will bring Leo Nikoláyevitch fresh demonstrations of love and sympathy. They are already coming to us from all parts of the world.

How can I refrain from giving utterance to the grief I have felt at another insensate step taken recently, namely the secret order by which, in case of Leo Nikoláyevitch's death, the Holy Synod forbids priests to perform the Church service? At whom is this intended to strike? At the mortal remains from which life has departed, or at the man's relatives, at the believers of his family? If it is a threat, who are the threatened persons? Do you really think I shall not find some priest to recite the burial service of the Church for my husband, and the prayers for the dead—either a good priest who fears the God of Love and not men, or a bad priest who will do what I please for a fee? . . .

The whole letter, of which the above is but an extract, shows how keenly the Countess felt the attack upon her husband, and how firmly she held her own opinions independently of him, as well as of the Bishops.

The decree produced a tremendous sensation, and in some people it aroused anger and hatred against Tolstoy, culminating in fresh threats of murder.

His books were excluded from some of the public libraries. The newspapers were forbidden to mention demonstrations made in his honour. The Censor stopped the reproduction of his portrait in one of the illustrated papers. Sermons were preached against him; and a Moscow Temperance Society expelled him from its membership! Even the telegraph offices began to refuse to accept messages expressing sympathy with him, and letters of that character were stopped in the post—whereas abusive letters and postcards arrived accurately.

The sentence of Excommunication evoked great interest

in Tolstoy's forbidden books, and people were more eager than ever to obtain and read them.

Semyónof, travelling by rail, overheard a conversation between a young woman who was carrying a baby in her arms, and an old one who asked :

‘Why have they anathematised him?’

‘Why,’ calmly replied the young one, speaking with assurance, ‘he began to preach and write that marriage is unnecessary. . .!’

‘How is that? Are we to do without a proper marriage?’ asked the elder, her eyes opening wide.

‘No, there is to be no marriage. Men and women are not to come together. It is the cause of destruction, and children are born for destruction.’

‘Then are we all to be like monks and nuns?’

‘Yes; everything else is deadly sin, says he. Well, after he wrote that book, a year or two passed and then, lo and behold! a child was born to him! [This happened not to be true, though it might have been—for the Countess had a miscarriage.] So then they began to judge him for demanding of people what he himself did not do. So they took him and turned him out of the Church.’

The old woman remained silent, evidently thinking over what she had heard; and the young one pressed her boy to her heart and gave him a sounding kiss on his lips.

On the day the Edict was made public (February 25) as Tolstoy was crossing a public square, some one exclaimed, ‘See! There goes the devil in human form!’ But the crowd—instead of hustling or attacking him, as a year or two previously might easily have happened to any man denounced by the Church—cheered him very heartily.

Répin's new portrait of him at the Exhibition in Petersburg was decorated by the public with quantities of flowers; and this so displeased the Authorities that they ordered the portrait to be removed from the Exhibition. The schoolboys in the streets greeted Tolstoy; masses of letters and telegrams poured in upon him. Before dinner, a

deputation of women came to express their sympathy. After dinner, the yard was full of students, girls and workmen, to whom Tolstoy went out and talked, pacifying them and advising them, in the then general state of unrest, not to be led into any rash conduct. On Tolstoy himself the Excommunication had exceedingly little effect; and he greeted friends who came to see him with the words: 'I positively decline to accept congratulations!'

Another remark he made was: "The gates of Hell shall not prevail,"—and yet, when an ex-Lieutenant writes something, they make all this commotion!'

It was a moment when, as had been the case during the famine ten years before, Tolstoy appeared in the forefront of the movement of emancipation. His house was a centre of inspiration to the timid and desponding, and for the time being the deep-seated divergence between him and the Constitutionalists dropped out of sight.

The reply to the Synod which he penned is a most noble and inspiring document. Though it is accessible in full in *Essays and Letters*, I must here quote at least a few paragraphs in which, after reproving the Synod for misrepresentation, he states what he really believes and does not believe:

That I have renounced the Church which calls itself Orthodox, is perfectly correct.

But I renounced it not because I had risen against the Lord, but on the contrary, only because with all the strength of my soul I wished to serve him. Before renouncing the Church, and fellowship with the people which was inexpressibly dear to me, I—having seen some reasons to doubt the Church's integrity—devoted several years to the investigation of its theoretic and practical teachings. For the theory, I read all I could about Church doctrine, and studied and critically analysed dogmatic theology; while as to practice, for more than a year I followed strictly all the injunctions of the Church, observing all the fasts and all the services. And I became convinced that Church doctrine is theoretically a

crafty and harmful lie, and practically a collection of the grossest superstitions and sorcery, which completely conceals the whole meaning of Christ's teaching.

And I really repudiated the Church, ceased to observe its ceremonies, and wrote a will instructing those near me that when I die they should not allow any servants of the Church to have access to me, but should put away my dead body as quickly as possible—without having any incantations or prayers over it—just as one puts away any objectionable and useless object, that it may not be an inconvenience to the living. . . .

That I deny the incomprehensible Trinity; the fable, which is altogether meaningless in our time, of the fall of the first man; the blasphemous story of a God born of a virgin to redeem the human race—is perfectly true. But God, a Spirit; God, love; the only God—the Source of all—I not only do not deny, but I attribute real existence to God alone, and I see the whole meaning of life only in fulfilling His will, which is expressed in the Christian teaching.

It is also said: 'He does not acknowledge a life and retribution beyond the grave.' If one is to understand, by life beyond the grave, the Second Advent, a hell with eternal torments, devils, and a Paradise of perpetual happiness—it is perfectly true that I do not acknowledge such a life beyond the grave; but eternal life and retribution here and everywhere, now and for ever, I acknowledge to such an extent that, standing now, at my age, on the verge of my grave, I often have to make an effort to restrain myself from desiring the death of this body—that is, birth to a new life; and I believe every good action increases the true welfare of my eternal life, and every evil action decreases it.

It is also stated that I reject all the Sacraments. That is quite true. I consider all the Sacraments to be coarse, degrading sorcery, incompatible with the idea of God or with the Christian teaching, and also as infringements of very plain injunctions in the Gospels. In the Baptism of Infants I see a palpable perversion of the whole meaning which might be attached to the baptism of adults who consciously accepted Christianity. . . .

So that is what is true and what is untrue in the Synod's



Edict about me. I certainly do not believe in what they say they believe in. But I do believe in much they wish to persuade people that I disbelieve in.

I believe in this: I believe in God, whom I understand as Spirit, as Love, as the Source of all. I believe that He is in me and I in Him. I believe that the will of God is most clearly and intelligibly expressed in the teaching of the man Jesus, whom to consider, and pray to, as God, I esteem the greatest blasphemy. I believe that man's true welfare lies in fulfilling God's will, and His will is that men should love one another, and should consequently do to others as they wish others to do to them—of which it is said in the Gospels that in this is the law and the prophets. I believe, therefore, that the meaning of the life of every man is to be found only in increasing the love that is in him; that this increase of love leads man, even in this life, to ever greater and greater blessedness, and after death gives him the more blessedness the more love he has, and helps more than anything else towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth: that is, to the establishment of an order of life in which the discord, deception, and violence that now rule will be replaced by free accord, by truth, and by the brotherly love of one for another. I believe that to obtain progress in love there is only one means: prayer—not public prayer in churches, plainly forbidden by Jesus, but private prayer, like the sample given us by Jesus, consisting of the renewing and strengthening, in our own consciousness, of the meaning of our life and of our complete dependence on the will of God.

Whether these beliefs of mine offend, grieve, or prove a stumbling-block to any one, or hinder anything, or give displeasure to anybody, or not, I can as little change them as I can change my body. I must myself live my own life, and I must myself alone meet death (and that very soon) and therefore I cannot believe otherwise than as I—preparing to go to that God from whom I came—do believe. I do not believe my faith to be the one indubitable truth for all time, but I see no other that is plainer, clearer, or answers better to all the demands of my reason and my heart. Should I find such a one, I shall at once accept it; for God requires nothing but the

truth. But I can no more return to that from which, with such suffering, I have escaped, than a flying bird can re-enter the eggshell from which it has emerged.

'He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or Church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself (his own peace) better than all,' said Coleridge.

I travelled the contrary way. I began by loving my Orthodox faith more than my peace, then I loved Christianity more than my Church, and now I love truth more than anything in the world. And up to now, truth, for me, corresponds with Christianity as I understand it. And I hold to this Christianity; and to the degree in which I hold to it I live peacefully and happily, and peacefully and happily approach death.

That same month (15th March) Tolstoy wrote an Appeal to the Tsar and to his chief Minister, which was delivered to them but was not published at the time. In it he says, of some disturbances that had then broken out:

Very possibly the disturbances that have now broken out may be suppressed, though it is also possible that the soldiers and police, on whom the Government place such reliance, may realise that they are being called on to commit the terrible crime of fratricide—and may refuse to obey. But even if the present disturbance is suppressed, it will not be extinguished, but will burn in secret more and more fiercely, and will inevitably burst out sooner or later with increased strength, and produce yet greater sufferings and crimes. . . .

It seems to you that some troublesome dissatisfied men have arisen, who disturb the people. . . . If, really, it were all due to troublesome and wicked men, it would only be necessary to catch them and shut them up in prison and execute them, and all disturbances would be at an end. But, in fact, during more than thirty years, these people have been caught, imprisoned, and executed or banished by thousands; yet their number is ever increasing, and discontent not only grows, but spreads so that it has now reached millions of the working-classes—the great majority of the whole nation. And you need only cease

naïvely to credit the statement made by the Minister of the Interior in a recent Circular, namely, that 'it is only necessary for the police to disperse the crowd promptly, and to fire at it if it does not disperse, for all to be tranquil and quiet,' and you will clearly see the cause that produces discontent among the people, and finds expression in disturbances which are assuming ever greater and wider and deeper dimensions. . . .

He then enumerates the demands of the people, which may be summarised as:

- (1) Equal rights for the peasants.
  - (2) Abolition of special enactments enabling the Common Law to be overridden.
  - (3) Liberty of education, and
  - (4) Religious liberty.
- 'Such,' he continues,

are the modest and easily realisable desires, we believe, of the immense majority of the Russian people. The adoption of these measures would undoubtedly pacify the people, and free them from those terrible sufferings and (what is worse than sufferings) crimes, which will inevitably be committed on both sides, if the Government busies itself only with the suppression of these disturbances, leaving their cause untouched.

'Only if this is done,' says Tolstoy to the Tsar, 'can your position be safe and really strong'; and he concludes with the words:

This is written by Leo Tolstoy, who in writing it has tried to express not his own thoughts only, but the opinion of many of the best, kindest, most disinterested and most reasonable people—who all desire these things.

When read a few years later, after the disasters of the Japanese war, and when the long-suppressed discontent had burst out into a Revolution, this letter appeared truly prophetic!

## CHIEF AUTHORITIES FOR CHAPTER XV

Tolstoy : *What is Art ?* ; London, 1898.

Tolstoy : *Essays and Letters* ; London, 1903.

A. Maude : *A Peculiar People : the Doukhobors* ; London, 1905.

Prince D. N. Shahovskoy, in *Minousshie Gody* ; September 1908.

Semyonof, in *Vestnik Evropy* ; September 1908.

The Synod's Decree of Excommunication is given in *L. N. Tolstoy Monografiya Andreevitcha* ; Petersburg, 1905.

Descriptions of V. G. Tchertkof are given in English in *Belinda the Backward*, a story by Salome Hocking, and in Russian in *The Diary of a Russian Woman*, by Dyakonova, vol. iii.

Elbert Hubbard's article in the *Pall Mall Magazine* of August 1903, deserves a place among the curiosities of literature. It libels the Countess, contains absurdly untrue statements about Tolstoy, and is altogether misleading. The editor of the Magazine published it under the impression that Elbert Hubbard had visited the Tolstoy's, and knew what he was writing about: whereas he was simply romancing.

## CHAPTER XVI

### CONCLUSION

Influence of isolation. The Mormons. Women and politics. Beggars. Kindliness *versus* efficiency. An American Senator. [1901] Illness. Relation to disease and death. Journey to the Crimea. Sevastopol Museum. Yálta. Fluctuating health. [1902]. *Letter to the Tsar*. Very ill. Pobedonóstsef's preparations. *What is Religion?* Leipzig prosecution. I revisit Yásnaya. V. V. Stásóf. Ginzburg. M. A. Stahóvitch. The Talmud. Wagner. Declines responsibility for booklet on Sex. *The Corpse*. Refuses offers for his works. Plays cards. Family affection. [1903] Protests against Jew-baiting. Nietzsche. Slumming. *Thou Shalt Not Kill!* seized in Germany. [1904] Attitude towards Japanese war, the Revolution, and the Reformers. [1905] Edward Carpenter. [1906] The Princess Obolénsky and the proceeds of *Resurrection*. Debility. Illness of the Countess. Unpopularity. Vyborg Manifesto. The right to refuse to slay. Chess. The Revolution. Taxation of Land Values. [1907] Death of his daughter, Mary, Princess Obolénsky. Begging letters. Classes for children. [1908] *I Cannot Be Silent*, a protest against the hangings. Eightieth birthday. Supports W. G. Bryan. Letter to a lady Sec-tarian. [1909] Visits Moscow. Bernard Shaw. *Blanco Pos-net* and *The Power of Darkness*. The Censor. Poor Law. 'Two Gods.' Eastern religions. Maklakóf and the Land Question. His will. Letter to his wife. Leaves home. Last illness and death.

Tolstoy's character and views are among the many things misunderstood because people will rush to simple conclusions on complex matters. It has been my task to point out that though Tolstoy is sincere and wise, he, like all mortals, makes mistakes—and does so just because he, too, over-

simplifies and would solve the very complex problems of property, sex and Government, by the all too simple method of utterly condemning and rejecting those things.

It is true that by rejecting them we might rid ourselves of many customary ills, but not without flying to others that do not trouble us now. As I have already suggested, a moral as well as an intellectual error is involved in the supposition that our forefathers arranged matters as they did, for no other reason than that they were bad men, and that we ought to make a clean sweep of all the institutions they have framed.

One must cordially sympathise with Tolstoy's desire to centralise, unify and simplify life's teaching; that is just what all who take life and conduct seriously must aim at; but the dilemma is, that as soon as opinions are reduced to a concise formula—whether it be 'the blood of Jesus,' the 'infallible Church,' 'Non-Resistance by physical force,' or what not—we find that such formulas fail to carry conviction to those who realise the many-sidedness of life; and generally such short and easy solutions finally become hindrances to the attainment of truth.

Andrew D. White, giving an account of a visit he paid to Tolstoy, remarks that, in a land which had till then known no public body in which the discussion of large public questions was allowed, from lack of meeting other men of similar calibre to his own, a Russian thinker, 'having given birth to striking ideas, coddles and pets them until they become the full-grown spoilt children of his brain. He can see neither spot nor blemish in them, and at last virtually believes himself infallible.' He applies these remarks to Tolstoy, and adds that 'his love of humanity, real though it certainly is, is accompanied by a depreciation of the ideas, statements and proposals of almost every other human being, and by virtual intolerance of all thought which differs in the slightest degree from his own.' White says all this, while fully admitting the influence of Tolstoy's striking and sincere personality; and though I do not care

to dwell on that side of things, I cannot deny that if, instead of having his works suppressed, Tolstoy had had them fairly criticised, it would have been good both for him and for them.

In the article I have just referred to, White records several characteristic remarks Tolstoy made to him. For instance, speaking of the Mormons, he remarked that no doubt two-thirds of their religion is deception, but on the whole 'he preferred a religion which professed to have dug its sacred book out of the earth, to one which pretended that it was let down from heaven.'

Of women, he said that they 'ought to have all rights except political ones. They are unfit to discharge political duties. Woman is not man's equal in the highest qualities: she is not so self-sacrificing as man. Men will at times sacrifice their families for an idea; women will not.'

He added that he had known but two or three really self-sacrificing women in his life, and they were unmarried. Education would not change women; they are illogical by nature.

White noticed Tolstoy's habit of giving copper money to the beggars who swarm in Moscow, even when he knew they wanted it for vodka. In reply to a remonstrance, Tolstoy said that in such cases the results of our actions are not the main thing, but the cultivation of better feelings in the giver.

This, I may remark, is parallel to his feeling that not the success of our work matters, but the spirit in which we do it. It is exceedingly difficult to define the amount of truth such views contain. To what extent, for instance, may we endanger other people's safety, or sacrifice the success of a business entrusted to us, in order to cultivate a kindlier state of mind in ourselves, or in those whom we meet?

No doubt we harsher people of the West have much to learn from Russian warm-heartedness; but what I never could get Tolstoy to feel, was the spirit underlying Abraham Lincoln's words, uttered towards the close of a war he

thought it his duty to conduct until the other side was willing to accept fair terms :

With malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us finish the work we are in . . . and do all which may achieve a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

Again and again, when I have heard Tolstoy urge people to yield, submit and forgo, I have felt that there was another side to the matter, and that one must sometimes try to get things straight, if not for one's own sake, then for the sake of others. As Lowell has it :

'Be kind 'z you please, but fustly make things fast,  
For plain Truth 's all the kindness that 'll last.'

To synthesise the two truths : that we must get the world's work done efficiently, and that we ought to do it without friction, is perhaps as difficult a problem as any that we poor mortals have to face. Probably we of the Anglo-Saxon world lay too little stress on the state of mind in which we work, and the men of the Slavonic world, too little on getting things well done. Tolstoy, at any rate, has shown scant appreciation of those modern achievements in which no one man's work has been of as much importance as the willingness of the many to recognise a common standard and adapt their efforts to a common end. Yet those collective achievements have been very remarkable ; they have altered the face of the globe, and their accomplishment indicates moral qualities in their doers which should not be ignored.

White's account of Tolstoy, referred to above, recalls by contrast Tolstoy's comment on an American Senator who once visited him, and with whom he took a long walk. Returning home to dinner, Tolstoy asked his family if they knew how the United States is governed. They confessed to not knowing much about it. 'Well,' said he, 'each State elects its wisest and best men to govern it, but the two very wisest and very best men from each State are sent to the



Senate at Washington to make laws for the whole country. I have had one of those men with me to-day. He has learned all the sciences, and knows all the languages, and has read all the books—the only pity is, that he has not yet begun to think!’

After the excitement of the early part of 1901, Tolstoy's health, which had seemed to rally, again failed him, and in June 1901 he was seriously unwell. He was then staying with his eldest daughter, Madame Soohoteén, at her estate beyond Orél. The roads were bad, and on the day of his return home, he decided to go on foot to the station, about ten miles from the house; nor would he let any one accompany him. It grew dusk, and he missed his way. Coming to a peasant's hut in the wood, he asked the man to show him the way, but the fellow said he was afraid of the wolves, and would not. Eventually and with great difficulty Tolstoy found the road, and was there overtaken by the other members of the family, who were driving to the station. When they arrived it was night, and Tolstoy was quite exhausted and in great pain. The train was very crowded; but, as usual, he avoided going first-class, and was unable to lie down. A friend who had a position on the railway, had however arranged for a special carriage to be coupled on at Orél, and though this was done contrary to his express wish, in his enfeebled condition Tolstoy was glad to avail himself of it, and he spent the rest of the night more comfortably. He arrived at Yásnaya quite ill. On 24th June, P. A. Boulanger, a friend of Tolstoy's and of mine, wrote me from Yásnaya that Tolstoy was very weak and constantly ill. 'If he works through the morning he is unable to do anything more. . . .'

To this letter Tolstoy added a postscript:

I do not want to let this letter go without adding a few words. What B. says of my health and weariness is correct, but it arises chiefly from the fact that I am just finishing an article, *The Only*

*Means.* It deals with the question, What can free the labourers from their ills? I try to show that only their faith in God and in His law as expressed in the Gospels—the golden rule—can do this.

I have worked at it very much and seem to have arrived at the point at which I begin to spoil it. I am completely absorbed in this work, and therefore postpone correspondence. My health is such that I must not complain, for I can, I think, work as well as formerly. That, however, is for the readers and for you to judge. . . .

I want also to write something about religion, its absence and the consequences thereof; and also about education, and on one other matter which I do not wish to name.

On 29th June his strength quite failed him, and the action of his heart became very irregular.

His wife sent to Toúla for a doctor, though he objected as usual, believing that physical sufferings should be utilised to free one's spirit from subjection to the flesh, and to place it, at death, in the hands of the Father, unsoiled by the agitations, desires and passions of physical life. He would not regard illness or death as an evil. 'Illness,' said he, 'is like fire—it destroys but also warms.'

After recovering from a serious crisis, he remarked to his daughter: 'The sledge was at the door, and I had only to get in and go; but suddenly the horses turned round and the vehicle was sent away. It's a pity, for it was a good sledge road, and when I'm ready to start again, it may be rough.'

The improvement in his health did not last long. On 3rd July he could scarcely speak, and the doctor pronounced his condition very serious.

At intervals he felt better, and was even able to go on with his writing; but these intervals were always followed by dangerous relapses, and at last the family decided to send to Moscow for the doctor who had successfully attended him during a previous severe illness in 1899. This doctor diagnosed his complaint as angina pectoris, and said it would be necessary to take him to a warmer climate.

The summer, which was drawing to its close, had been cold; and Yásnaya Polyána, with its shady, neglected park, was too damp for him to go out in.

The medical examinations and consultations Tolstoy had to endure, were a source of much suffering to him; and he said he envied the peasants who could not afford doctors or journeys to warm countries, and whose only resource was to prepare themselves to die well, recognising *that* as of the greatest importance.

On 11th and 12th July he was again able to walk about the rooms, and at once set to work, and finished *The Only Means*.

His illness, during which his spiritual consciousness had strengthened, had given him a sense of deep satisfaction. He often recalled his favourite verse (Luke): 'Take up thy cross *daily* and follow me,' and he tried not to disturb the mood of self-condemnation, meekness and love in which his sufferings had left him.

During this illness he was greatly cheered by his good relations with his brother, Sergius, for whom he had always felt a strong affection, and with whom he came into closer touch during the years preceding the elder brother's death, which occurred on 22nd August 1904.

The Countess Pánin, who had an estate at Gáspra, near Yálta, gladly lent her palace to the Tolstoys when she heard that the doctors recommended a warmer climate; and the Minister of Railways, Prince Hilkóf, promptly gave orders that a special through-car should be coupled to any train selected, to enable Tolstoy to travel to Sevastopol without changing.

One cold, dark evening at the end of August, wrapped in a fur-coat, he was taken to T'óula by his wife, two daughters, and some friends. The roads were in a dreadful state, and by the time the party reached the station at 10 P.M. he felt very ill; but it was thought that the drive back to Yásnaya would be worse for him than the long journey in a warm, dry railway carriage; so they decided to go on.

In the morning it was warm and sunny, and he felt better, and the whole party brightened up. At Khárkof station a large crowd had collected to see him. He was distressed by this, but consented to some students being admitted to the car to speak to him; and, in response to repeated demands, he even showed himself at the window.

After that, he was again alarmingly ill, but recovered before reaching Sevastopol, where another crowd had assembled, but was kept away from the station by the police. Here he stayed one night; and in the afternoon was sufficiently well to leave his hotel and go for a short walk with P. A. Boulanger. They visited the Museum of relics of the siege. An officer they met introduced himself to Tolstoy, who remembered the man's father and mother, and how he had danced with the latter forty-five years before. Tolstoy related many episodes of the siege, describing the position of the batteries and recalling some of the defenders; but the sight of his own portrait in the Museum distressed him, and turned the current of his thoughts into bitter channels. Complaining of fatigue, he went back to the hotel, and on the way remarked: 'What a pity! . . . What is the use of that expensive building, and that careful collection of buttons and splinters? One ought to forget all that horror and savagery and shame; yet people try to inflame the recollection. . . . It is horrible, horrible! . . .

From Sevastopol the party drove to Yálta by road. At the first station, where they stopped to change horses, Tolstoy walked on ahead, and met a young fellow (apparently a shop-assistant or small tradesman) of whom he inquired the name of some place on the shore below. The stranger answered the poorly and strangely clad old man contemptuously; and, when the Countess drove up, was amazed to see him get into the carriage and drive off. Turning to Boulanger, who was waiting for a second carriage, the fellow asked who that old man was.

'Count Tolstoy,' was the answer.

‘What? Count Tolstoy, the writer? . . . Oh, my God, my God!’ exclaimed the other in despair, flinging his cap into the dirty road. ‘I would have given all I possess to see him; and how I spoke to him!’

At Yálta the weather was warm and fine, and Tolstoy’s health improved rapidly.

Having settled in his new surroundings, he again began to write. His (still unpublished) Caucasian story, *Hadjimourat*, was more or less of a recreation for him; but he worked very seriously at *What is Religion?* and *The Soldier’s Notes*,—which latter he undertook after his fierce indignation had been aroused by reading General Dragomírof’s *Soldier’s Notes*, in which Gospel texts are used as incitements to man-slaughter. ‘Read this,’ he said, ‘it is awful! . . . “Always strike, never defend yourself. If your bayonet breaks, use the butt; if that fails, use your fist; if your fist is injured, use your teeth!”’

On 23rd September 1901, he wrote to me saying:

My work on religion progresses very slowly and with difficulty, in spite of the fact that the more I think on this subject, the more I see its importance, and I very much desire to express what I think about it.

I called the preacher Kiesewetter [this, in reply to an inquiry about the Evangelical preacher in *Resurrection*] because I took the type from Baedeker, a German, who used to preach in English.

I am living amid pleasant nature and climate, and all possible comforts of life, but I feel that mental energy is absent, though I do not know whether this comes from illness or from material satisfaction.

Tchéhof and Górký were both at Yálta, and visited him; and Goldenweiser, the pianist, used to come and play for him; but in general he lived a very quiet life, which allowed him to concentrate on his work whenever he was well enough to do so.

On 20th November, his daughter-in-law, the Countess Ólga K. Tolstoy, wrote me from Gáspra:

All this time Leo Nikoláyevitch has been suffering a good deal, and was even laid up for one week. He is again feverish and has rheumatism in hand and foot, so that for some days the pain and weakness prevented his writing anything. He is now much better again, and has begun to go out walking a little. But he is still very weak, and after his customary work has not strength for anything else. That is why he has not written to you for so long. He asks me to transmit to you his great gratitude for your letters and for *Sevastopol*.

In December he seemed again to have recovered, but could not be persuaded to be careful and moderate in the exercise he took. He would not live the 'old-man's life' advised by the doctors.

At that time, to my own great distress, I managed to grieve him. There had been much confusion and many complications in connection with the publishing of *Resurrection*, and when printing the first audited 'Account of Receipts and Expenditure,' I narrated the history of the matter more fully than was perhaps necessary; and of this publication I sent a copy to Tolstoy, who, on 23rd December 1901, replied:

I have received your letter and article. I am very sorry you wrote it. You have thereby grieved and in no way strengthened the feeling of love—and that is the chief business of life—in the soul of Tchertkóf, a man near to you, but have on the contrary evoked in him an angry feeling, involuntarily experienced, though not expressed in any way.

All considerations as to accounts and donations, weigh as nothing in comparison with the infringement of love. I understand that there was much that was unpleasant to you, and you did not succeed in restraining yourself, as happens to us all, and therefore I do not condemn you, but, loving you, point out what seems to me your offence.

Please forgive me, if I am doing what is unpleasant to you.

I think I already wrote you how unusually the first volume of your edition pleases me. All in it is excellent: the edition and the remarks, and chiefly the translation, and yet more the conscientiousness with which all this has been done. I

happened to open it at *Two Hussars*, and read on to the end, just as if it were something new and written in English.

My health fluctuates, but does not prevent my working ; for which I am very grateful. However, even without that, I cannot but be grateful to Him who has made possible for me so beautiful a life as that which is at my disposal.

Give my love to your wife and your sister-in-law and [Miss] Jencken, if they are with you or near you. How are your children? One has not had time to look round, before they—the elder ones—are already announcing their own individual qualities and demands. God grant they may be good ones.

The book he speaks so kindly of was *Sevastopol*, the first volume of an attempt I was at that time making to get out a complete library edition of his works.

In January he had another very bad attack of palpitation of the heart and shortness of breath, and was again seriously  
 1902 ill with angina pectoris ; but he continued to work whenever he could, and wrote an article *On Religious Toleration*, evoked by reading a speech made by his friend, M. A. Stahóvitch, at a Missionary Congress at Orel.

On 16th January, believing that he had not long to live, he completed a letter to the Tsar in which he said

DEAR BROTHER,—I consider this form of address most suitable, because in this letter I address you as a brother man rather than as a Tsar ; and also because, awaiting the approach of death, I write as it were from the other world. I should not like to die without having told you what I think of your present activity and of what it might be. . . .

After recounting the ills from which Russia was suffering, he proceeds to say that neither Orthodoxy nor Autocracy is suitable for Russia to-day :

With reference to Autocracy, it may have been natural to Russians when they still believed the Tsar to be an infallible earthly deity, who himself personally ruled the people ; but it is far from natural now, when they all know—or, as soon as they get a little education, will know—that, in the first place, a good Tsar is only *un heureux hasard* [a lucky accident] and

that Tsars may be and have been monsters and maniacs, like John IV and Paul; and, secondly, that however good and wise a Tsar may be, he cannot possibly himself rule a nation of 130 million people, but that they are ruled by men who surround the Tsar, and who are more concerned about their own position than about the people's welfare.

You will say that a Tsar can choose disinterested and good people to be his helpers. Unfortunately he cannot; for he only knows some dozens of men, who by chance or intrigues have got near him and are careful to ward off from him all who might supplant them. So that a Tsar does not choose from the thousands of live, energetic, truly enlightened and honourable folk, who feel drawn to public work, but only from those of whom Beaumarchais says: '*Médiocre et rampant, et on parvient à tout*' [Mediocre and cringing, one attains to everything].

Autocracy is an obsolete form of Government, which may suit the demands of people cut off from the world somewhere in Central Africa, but not the demands of the Russian people, who are growing ever more and more enlightened by the enlightenment common to the whole world; and therefore that form of Government, and the Orthodoxy bound up with it, can only be upheld (as is now being done) by violence of all kinds: a state of siege, banishments by Administrative Order, executions, religious persecution, the prohibition of books and newspapers, the perversion of education, and in general by all kinds of evil and cruel deeds.

Such have hitherto been the actions of your reign: beginning with your reply to the Tver Deputation—which provoked the indignation of the whole Russian people—when you called their most legitimate desires 'insensate fancies'; all your regulations concerning Finland; the Chinese seizures; your project of a Hague Conference, which was accompanied by an increase in the army; your restriction of self-government and strengthening of Administrative despotism; your consent to the institution of a spirit-monopoly—that is, to the Government trading in poison which ruins the people; and finally your obstinacy in maintaining corporal punishment in spite of all the representations made to you in favour of the abolition



of that senseless and quite useless measure, disgraceful to the Russian people.

Measures of coercion make it possible to oppress, but not to govern, a people. Indeed, in our time the only means to govern the people, is by placing oneself at the head of their movement from evil to good, from darkness to light, and by leading them towards the attainment of the objects nearest to that end.

To be able to do that, it is necessary, first of all, to let them express their wishes and needs; and having heard them, to fulfil those which respond to the demands, not of one class or section, but of the majority—the mass of the working-people.

Then follows an enumeration of those demands: the abolition of special laws making pariahs of the peasants; freedom to migrate; freedom of education; freedom of conscience; and—

above all, the whole 100 million people will say with one voice that they desire freedom to use the land—that is to say, the abolition of private property in land. . . .

In any case the first thing that lies before the Government is the abolition of the gag which now prevents the people from expressing its wishes and needs. One cannot do good to a man whose mouth one has tied up in order not to hear what he wants. . . .

Forgive me if I have accidentally offended or grieved you by what I have written in this letter. I am moved only by a desire for the welfare of the Russian people and of yourself. . . .

That letter is characteristic in its ardent desire to remedy great evils, its self-reliance, its assurance that everything the Tsar has done (including the calling of the Hague Conference) is quite wrong, but that being a human being, he yet has a soul to which an appeal may profitably be addressed, and may yet be persuaded to turn over a new leaf and do everything that is right. In it, extreme harshness as to the past and present, mingles with extreme optimism as to the future.

There is an evident contradiction between the conviction that Government is necessarily and hopelessly wrong, and the suggestion that the Tsar might do great good by legislation. Tolstoy cannot have it both ways. If the badness of Government is a matter of degree, much of his customary invective loses its point; but if that badness is absolute and inevitable, what is the use of asking a Tsar to do anything, except resign? What, however, attracts one, here as always, is Tolstoy's courage, sincerity and ardent desire that right should prevail, and his freedom from mean and selfish aims.

All this while, the constantly fluctuating condition of Tolstoy's health perplexed his doctors; and when a further complication showed itself, Dr. Shouróvsky was telegraphed for from Moscow, and found the patient suffering from inflammation of the lungs.

News that he was not expected to survive reached the Holy Synod; and Pobedonóstsef issued secret instructions that in the event of Tolstoy's death a priest should immediately enter the house (to which, as it contained a chapel, the clergy had right of access) and on coming out again should announce that Tolstoy had repented, returned to the bosom of Mother Church, confessed, and received the Eucharist before his death. This news would have been cabled round the world, to supplement the efforts of the Censor to destroy the effects of Tolstoy's teaching.

By the end of February, however, the patient was better, and before long he was able to go out in a bath-chair. Presently the family began to think of returning to Yásnaya; but in May he was again at death's door, this time—if the doctors' diagnosis may be trusted—with enteric fever. Once more his marvellous recuperative power manifested itself, and at last, in June, the homeward journey really began. Too weak to be driven by road, Tolstoy, after waiting a week for calm weather, was taken to Sevastopol by steamer. There he had a few hours to spare, and suffering from the intolerable heat, asked to

be allowed to rest in the quiet station garden. He had not sat there long, before an irate lady sternly ordered him out, saying that 'this was the garden of a high railway official, and not the place for goodness-knows-who to loaf about in!'

Before the train started, a crowd collected to see the great writer off, and this same lady came eagerly imploring to be allowed to enter his car to apologise for her rudeness. Owing to the crush, it was impossible to let her in. 'How could I tell that it was Tolstoy?' she said in great distress, handing in a bouquet and begging that he should be asked to forgive her.

The chief work Tolstoy wrote during his stay at Gáspra was *What is Religion?* (*Essays and Letters*). He had planned this before leaving Yásnaya, and had then partly expressed its idea in two letters to a Russian priest and to a French pastor who had consulted him. It was finished in February 1902.

Whenever, as in this case, Tolstoy takes a great subject and chews the cud of reflection about it—if only he is not drawn astray by his pet prejudices—he produces a masterpiece. Why this admirable essay is not far better known and more quoted than it is, I can only explain by supposing that it—and some others like it—have been drowned in the stream of his Non-Resistant articles, and have thus escaped the attention they deserve.

Lack of space forbids my doing justice to that work, and I must content myself with giving a few extracts from it, and referring the reader to the translation of it in *Essays and Letters*.

Tolstoy's definition of religion is that:

True religion is a relation, accordant with reason and knowledge, which man establishes with the infinite life surrounding him, and it is such as binds his life to that infinity, and guides his conduct.

As I have already mentioned, he holds that the essenti-

ally important religious truths explaining life and guiding conduct, exist in all the great religions. Men are separated from one another by their superstitions, but united in the central truth. To save religion, Tolstoy would destroy the Churches! He says:

Christianity was perverted as all other religions had been, but with this difference: that just because Christianity most clearly proclaimed its fundamental principle—the equality of all men as sons of God—it was necessary most forcibly to pervert its whole teaching in order to hide this fundamental principle. And . . . this has been done to a greater extent than in any other religion. So that really no religion has ever preached things so evidently incompatible with reason and with contemporary knowledge, or so immoral, as the doctrines preached by Church-Christianity. Not to speak of all the absurdities of the Old Testament, such as the creation of light before the sun, the creation of the world 6000 years ago, the housing of all the animals in the Ark; or of the many immoral horrors, such as injunctions to massacre children and whole populations at God's command; not to speak even of the absurd Sacrament, of which Voltaire used to say, that though there have been and are many absurd religious doctrines, there never before was one in which the chief act of religion consisted in eating one's own God,—not to dwell on all that, what can be more absurd than that the Mother of God was both a mother and a virgin; that the sky opened and a voice spoke from up there; that Christ flew into the sky and sits somewhere at the right hand of his Father; or that God is both One and Three, not three Gods like Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, but One and yet Three? And what can be more immoral than the terrible doctrine that an angry and revengeful God punishes all men for Adam's sin, and sent His son to earth to save them, knowing beforehand that men would kill him and would therefore be damned, and that salvation from sin depends on being baptized; or in believing that all these things really happened, and that the son of God was killed by men that men might be saved, and that God will punish with eternal torments those who do not believe this? . . .

The very foundations of this religion, admitted by all, and formulated in the Nicene Creed, are so absurd and immoral, and run so counter to right feeling and to common-sense, that men cannot believe them. Men may repeat any form of words with their lips, but cannot believe things that have no meaning. It is possible to say with one's lips: 'I believe that the world was created 6000 years ago'; or, 'I believe Christ flew up into the sky and sat down next to his Father'; or, 'God is One and at the same time Three'—but no one can believe these things, for the words have no sense. And therefore men of our modern world who profess this perverted form of Christianity really believe in nothing at all.

And that is the peculiar characteristic of our time. . . .

Of faith, Tolstoy says:

Faith is neither hope nor credulity, but a special state of the soul. Faith is man's consciousness that his position in the world is such as obliges him to do certain things. . . . Thus, for instance, a man having defined his position in the world as that of a member of a nation chosen by God, which in order to enjoy God's protection must fulfil His demands, will live in such a way as to fulfil those demands; another man, having defined his position on the supposition that he has passed, and is passing, through various forms of existence, and that on his actions his better or worse future more or less depends, will be guided in life by that definition; and the conduct of a third man, who has defined his position as that of a chance combination of atoms, in which a consciousness has been temporarily kindled which must be extinguished for ever, will differ from that of the two first.

The conduct of these men will be different, because they have defined their positions differently—that is to say, they have different faiths. Faith is the same thing as religion, only with this difference: that by the word *religion* we imply something observed outside us, while faith is the same thing, experienced by man within himself. Faith is a relation man is conscious of towards the infinite universe; and from this

relation the direction of his activity results. And therefore, true faith is never irrational or incompatible with present-day knowledge, and it cannot be its characteristic to be supernatural or absurd, as people suppose, and as was expressed by a Father of the Church, who said: '*Credo quia absurdum*' [I believe because it is absurd]. On the contrary, the assertions of true faith, though they cannot be proved, never contain anything contrary to reason, or incompatible with human knowledge, but always explain that in life which would appear irrational and contradictory, without the conception supplied by faith. . . .

This religion of our times, common to all men, exists—not as some sect with all its peculiarities and perversions, but as a religion consisting of those principles which are alike in all the widespread religions known to us, and professed by more than nine-tenths of the human race; and that men are not yet completely brutalised, is due to the fact that the best men of all nations hold to this religion and profess it (even if unconsciously) and only the hypnotic deception practised on men by the aid of the priests and scientists now hinders people from consciously adopting it.

The principles of this true religion are so natural to men, that as soon as they are put before them they are accepted as something quite familiar and self-evident.

For us, the true religion is Christianity in those of its principles in which it agrees, not with the external forms, but with the basic principles of Brahmanism, Confucianism, Taoism, Hebraism, Buddhism, and even Mohammedanism. And just in the same way, for those who profess Brahmanism, Confucianism, etc.—true religion is that, the basic principles of which agree with those of all other religions. And these principles are very simple, intelligible and clear.

They are : that there is a God, the origin of all things; that in man dwells a spark from that Divine Origin, which man, by his way of living, can increase or decrease in himself; that to increase this divine spark man must suppress his passions and increase love in himself; and that the practical means to attain this result is to do to others as you would that they should do to you. . . .

'But that is not religion,' is what men of to-day will say, who

are accustomed to consider that the supernatural, *i.e.* the unmeaning, is the chief sign of religion. 'That is anything you like: philosophy, ethics, ratiocination—but not religion!' Religion, according to them, must be absurd and unintelligible. . . . But to assert that the supernatural and irrational, form the essential characteristic of religion, is like eating only rotten apples, and then asserting that a flabby bitterness and a harmful effect on the stomach are the prime characteristics of the fruit called Apple.

Religion is the definition of man's relation to the Source of all things, and of man's purpose in life resulting from that relation; and it supplies rules of conduct flowing from that purpose. And the universal religion, whose first principles are alike in all the faiths, fully meets the demands of this understanding of religion. It defines the relation of man to God, as that of a part to the whole; from this relation it deduces man's purpose, which is to increase the divine element in himself; and this purpose involves practical demands on man, in accord with the rule: Do to others as you wish them to do to you. . . .

It is, Tolstoy declares, not the upper classes, nor those united by Church superstitions, who can free the world from the social, economic and political evils that oppress it, but it is the truly religious, who will liberate mankind.

*They* are the men who will rend asunder the enchanted circle in which people are now confined. However few such men there may be, however humble their social position, however poor in education or ability, as surely as fire lights the dry steppe, so surely will they set the whole world aflame, and kindle all the hearts of men, withered by long lack of religion, and now thirsting for a renewal of life.

Religion is not a belief, settled once for all, in certain supernatural occurrences supposed to have taken place once upon a time, nor in the necessity for certain prayers and ceremonies; nor is it, as the scientists suppose, a survival of the superstitions of ancient ignorance, which in our time have no meaning or application to life; but religion is a certain relation of man to eternal life and to God, a relation accordant with reason and

contemporary knowledge; and it is the one thing that alone moves humanity forward towards its destined aim!

Not in Russia alone did Tolstoy's indictment of the Church as the foe of true religion, arouse animosity. At Leipzig, on 9th July, Diederichs, the publisher, and Dr. R. Löwenfeld, the translator of Tolstoy's *Reply to the Synod*, were tried for blasphemy; but the prosecution failed, the judge expressing his concurrence with the defendants' plea that Tolstoy was a great moral force.

Since *What is Religion?* Tolstoy has not, I think, written anything of equal scope and importance.

The objections which exist to a biography of a living man, become weightier as one draws nearer the end; and, beyond some personal recollections, I propose to give little more than a brief summary of the last few years. During that time Tolstoy's life has kept so even a tenor, and his thoughts and self-discipline have so strictly followed the path previously marked out, that a fuller account would merely confirm the impression already given; and, besides these excellent reasons, there is the fact that if I make my book too long, nobody will read it, and, except for the good the writing of it has done me, I shall have toiled in vain.

In August 1902 I had the pleasure of once more visiting Tolstoy. The plain, substantial country-house at Yásnaya, roomy withal and well adapted to its purpose, though with old-fashioned, rather bare furniture, worn bare-board floors in many of the rooms, and window-frames that need repairing and renewing, makes a different impression on me each time I go there, according to the people I meet, the circumstances, and my own state of mind. On this occasion, the large grounds seemed even more neglected and overgrown than of yore, as though announcing that their former master was absorbed in matters more serious than the trimness of his gardens.

Tolstoy himself had sufficiently recovered his health to be able to go for a two-hours' walk, though on returning home



he was glad to be helped upstairs. At times, too, he left the company in the large dining- and sitting-room and went to lie down. Once or twice he even dropped asleep in his chair.

He had, as we know, always been sceptical about medicine and doctors, and it was amusing to hear the Countess tell of his surprise at finding, at the time of his greatest weakness, that it really had a stimulating effect when they administered to him injections of camphor.

Speaking in his humorous way to his doctors, when already convalescent, he said: 'Well, gentlemen, I have always spoken badly of doctors, but now that I have got to know you better, I see that I did you great injustice. You are really very good men, and know all that your science teaches: the only pity is—that it knows nothing!'

From the time of his return from the Crimea, there has always been a doctor resident at Yásnaya, on his account; but before he would consent to this he stipulated that the doctor must also be at the disposal of the neighbouring peasants.

During this visit I was particularly impressed by the atmosphere of love and respect that surrounded Tolstoy from all about him, and from the visitors of all sorts and conditions who came to see him. His two younger daughters were at that time doing most of the work of copying his MSS. and assisting him with his correspondence. The elder of the two, the Princess Obolénsky, was living with her husband in the 'wing' house, from whence they came across for most of their meals. Besides sympathising very strongly with her father, and sharing his feelings and outlook on life, she also shared his frank and friendly manner of speech.

The Countess Sophia Andréyevna, who was most solicitous about her husband's health and comfort, spoke with great frankness about both his qualities and limitations. She said that he had an artist's eye for clear and striking characteristics, and over-simplified his judgments of people.

When once he had seized on a trait in some one's character, he often let it blind him to other features; and that on this account he did not always read even his own children aright.

Tolstoy's sister, the Countess Mary N. Tolstoy, who, after her husband's death and the marriage of her three daughters, has become a nun, and lives at the Shámordin Convent, was staying at the house, having obtained leave of absence from her Nunnery on account of her brother's ill-health. Widely as their views differ, I think her vows as a nun, and his repudiation of vows and of the Church, spring ultimately from kindred roots; though it has also to be remembered that she was brought up to revere the conventual life, and that her two aunts had lived in convents, as has been mentioned in the first volume of this work.

She is a woman of a very frank, sincere and kindly nature, and knowing my interest in the events of her brother's life, she told me several anecdotes about him.

One of the guests was V. V. Stásóf, an old man, tall, upright and white-haired, a well-known critic and author, Head of the Imperial Academy Library at St. Petersburg, and an old friend of the family. His immense knowledge of books, as well as the great library at his command, enabled him to be of much use to Tolstoy when the latter wanted to read up what had been written on any subject he was dealing with.

Stásóf by no means shared all Tolstoy's views, but had the highest esteem for him. He remarked to me that Russia, among her great writers, has had three pre-eminently *intellectual* ones, namely, Herzen, Griboyédof and Tolstoy.

Another guest, a striking contrast to Stásóf—small, alert, black-haired and much younger—was the sculptor Ginzburg, who was modelling a bust of Tolstoy. I had met him (as well as Stásóf) on a former visit, and was much struck by his wonderful powers of mimicry. With a towel and chair he could give a whole performance of a nurse and baby; or he could become a most lifelike tailor, stitching clothes. It

was delightful to see how heartily Tolstoy laughed, and how keenly he appreciated this dramatic ability, saying to Ginzburg, 'Ah, if only our theatre realists could be got to understand that what is wanted is not to put real babies on the stage or show the real messes they make, but to convey, as you do, by voice and feature the real feeling that has to be expressed!'

Another visitor was M. A. Stahóvitch, friend of the Tolstoys from boyhood, and now *Maréchal de la Noblesse* of Orél, to whom Sipyágin, Minister of the Interior, had sent a reprimand for the speech he had delivered in favour of religious toleration. Stahóvitch questioned the Minister's right to reprove him on the matter, and thereupon received a letter from the Emperor, who however merely took exception at certain expressions Stahóvitch had used. The latter had come to consult Tolstoy as to the reply he was to write.

He brought several of his young relations with him. It was their first visit to Yásnaya, and they evidently felt it to be a great event. Tolstoy did not miss the opportunity of implanting in their minds the seeds of anti-war, vegetarian, and Henry-Georgeite principles; and it was curious to see the members of a great landowning family sit so amicably and respectfully at the feet of a Christian-anarchist who only by way of a concession to humanity's weakness, admitted anything as mild as the Single Tax—his own principles demanding the yielding up, not of land only but of all possessions to any one who cares to take them.

There was in the whole atmosphere of the house an infectious feeling of the importance of what was going on. There was plenty of mirth, but its savour came from the strenuous life lived there. It felt as though we were invited to share in the immediate regeneration of mankind; and as though the walls of Jericho would probably fall, next time we blew our trumpets.

On Sunday afternoon a Jewish clerk living in the neighbourhood asked to see Tolstoy. He had read some of his religious writings, and wanted further explanations. To

such callers Tolstoy is especially attentive. The man was invited in to tea, and soon a volume of extracts from the Talmud, a New Testament, and an English Concordance were on the table in the large room already mentioned, and questions and interpretations followed. Presently Tolstoy called for general attention, saying: 'Listen to this—I have just discovered something.' He then read the parable from Matthew xxii., beginning; 'The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a certain king, who made a marriage feast for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden . . . and they would not come.' He read verses 2 to 10; how other servants were sent, and still those who had been invited would not come; and how at last the king sent his servants to the highways, to gather all they could find, 'and the wedding was filled with guests.' Pausing, he asked whether that made sense, as a parable of the international democratisation of the kingdom of heaven. We all agreed that it did. He then went on to read verses 11 to 14, about the man who had not on a wedding garment, and whom the king ordered to be cast into the outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. When he asked whether that made sense with the rest of the parable, we all said it did not.

'Well,' said Tolstoy, 'I have just found where it comes from. It is part of a story in the Talmud, and must have been copied on to the end of the Gospel parable. Some scribe who knew the Talmud story by heart, was probably engaged to copy the Gospel, and coming on words that occur identically in both, blundered and put into the Gospels from memory a passage which makes sense where it stands in the Talmud, but makes nonsense here.'

A little later, some one asked Tolstoy whether he considered that Christianity has any advantage over Buddhism. He replied that both religions are equally concerned to prepare man for what may follow after the present life, but that Buddhism gives this world up as a bad job, accepting what is wrong in it as inevitable; whereas true Christianity

trains the soul of man by setting him to work to establish the kingdom of righteousness here and now.

Another day a telegram arrived from the Grand Duke Nicholas Miháylovitch asking for news of Tolstoy's health. This, Tolstoy told me, was a reminder that he had delayed acknowledging the service the Grand Duke had rendered him by handing to the Emperor the letter he had written from Gáspra.

That same day a workman called who had been injured at a factory and wanted to know how to secure compensation. After seeing him, Tolstoy said: 'In such cases I often have contradictory feelings. One sympathises with the man, but yet I constantly feel—as in this case—that he wishes to take unfair advantage of his injury. He makes out that he can do no work at all, while really he could do something if he wanted to.'

There are every day a number of pilgrims, tramps, or destitute peasants, who call simply to beg, and do not go empty away. Something, from a penny to a florin, is given to almost every one, and quite substantial help to some. Tolstoy feels that it is impolite not to give at least a little to every one who asks.

In each of the two houses on the estate there stood a grand piano; and eminent musicians, knowing Tolstoy's love of music, are frequent visitors at Yásnaya. During my stay Tanéyef performed a new composition of his own. It was in the elaborate style Tolstoy discountenances, and did not receive much commendation from him, though in general he says that Tanéyef's compositions are serious and noble.

I asked Tolstoy if he still held firmly to the view of Wagner's later operas, expressed in *What is Art?* Yes; he was as resolute as ever. Music acts in two ways; one way is by the transmission of the artist's feelings: that is the real thing, and of that Wagner has comparatively little. The other is by a physical effect on the nerves. Of this physiological effect acting strongly on the senses but not

directly on the feelings, there is, Tolstoy maintains, a great deal in Wagner.

He very seldom allows himself to complain of the way he is treated by critics or translators, but he could not refrain from expressing dissatisfaction with the new complete French edition of his works, which Stock was then beginning to publish. Among English versions he spoke well of Mrs. Garnett's and of my wife's, whose rendering of the French verses in *What is Art?* he pointed out to Stásos as a *tour de force*.

He was also much vexed by a résumé *La Revue Blanche* had published, purporting to be a statement of his views on the sex question, and by the fact that a number of French authors had accepted this as genuinely representing his opinions. He asked me to write out for him a letter, which he signed for publication, in which he remarked that: 'The opinions there attributed to me are grotesquely absurd, and are a careless, second-hand, and incorrect summary of a collection of articles and undated extracts put together and published by my friend, Vladímír Tchertkóf.'

The collection referred to, on which *La Revue Blanche* based its article, was one of three booklets Tchertkóf had published on *The Meaning of Life*, *Thoughts on God*, and *The Relations of the Sexes*, in which he had assembled various disconnected fragments from Tolstoy's letters, writings, and diaries, duly warning the readers that they 'should bear in mind that the order and mutual connection of the pieces are ours, not the author's,' and that Tolstoy 'did not contemplate their ultimate collection into one group.' Concerning such collections Tolstoy said to me very decidedly: 'However carefully, and with however good an intent they may be made, I cannot be held responsible for them.'

He had by this time completed, or almost completed, his Caucasian novel, *Hadji-Mourat*, as well as a play, *The Living Corpse*, based on an incident that came before his friend, N. V. Davýdof, who is a Judge, and a Lecturer on Criminal Law at Moscow University. The plot of the play

is that a drunkard, whose wife is in love with some one else, decides to disappear in order to set her free. He leaves his clothes, with his passport, by the bank of a river, and is supposed to be drowned. But one day, when drunk, he boasts of being 'a corpse,' and his identity is discovered. He is arrested and banished, but ultimately returns from Siberia, and things remain as they were before 'justice' intervened.

One day, after Tolstoy had written this play, a boy called to see him and said: 'I am the corpse's son.' He had heard of the play Tolstoy was writing, and had seen that it was founded on his father's case. 'The corpse' himself called later, and said he had given up drinking, and asked for help to find work. After hearing his story and asking him many questions, Tolstoy sent him with a letter to Davýdof, who found him a small post in the Law Courts, where he served under an assumed name; and no one knew of his identity till after his death. As a result of this talk, Tolstoy rewrote part of the play in order to present the man in a more favourable light.

I may mention that, in conversation with Davýdof, Tolstoy has admitted the need of tribunals to settle disputes, compensate the wronged, and elucidate crimes; but he imagines it all done in some patriarchal fashion, without compelling the accused to appear or to reply, or to undergo any punishment.

Another unpublished work is the novel, *Father Sergius*, to which reference has already been made in my first volume. In it a man of good position becomes a monk. A society woman, hearing of his fame for holiness, tempts him for the fun of the thing, and he remains firm, but later on he seduces a girl who is brought to him to be healed. Eventually he wanders about as a pilgrim, unknown and despised, and in this condition his real goodness finds scope to grow in strength.

These works, Tolstoy said, would not be published during his lifetime: partly to avoid the unpleasant scramble sure

to take place over their publication, and partly because, if they had to be published now, he would be tempted to spend too much time in polishing them, and this would interfere with weightier matters he wishes to attend to before he dies. The attention a new novel of his receives would also be a temptation to his vanity ('I have caught myself at it') and would engross him too much.

The Countess mentioned that a foreign publisher had recently offered a million roubles for the permanent copyright of her husband's works, but that the latter held rigidly to his repudiation of all such rights. Another publisher, Marx, was offering 100,000 roubles for a copyright limited to two years, but with no better success. Yet when I spoke to Tolstoy of my own reasons for copyrighting my translations he made no objection, but said: 'It is a matter I have not considered carefully with reference to its practical working, and I can only put a note of interrogation to it.' From what he said I was convinced that the action taken by the Free Age Press in this matter was not prompted or demanded by him, though he acquiesced in it, and approved the course adopted.

His physical weakness was very noticeable at this time, but almost the only sign of mental debility was that he had abandoned his favourite game of chess. Cards tax his attention less, and he played *vint* each evening, winning 18 pence one day and 10 pence the next. The game of Patience is a favourite resource of his when he finds himself unable to get on with his work and yet cannot get it out of his head. His daughter told me he played it one day from two till six o'clock in the afternoon, and on another occasion announced that he was trying whether the work he was writing would be of use to the world. The result of the game indicated that it would not be. 'But I shall write it all the same!' remarked he, as he put away the cards.

The subject always nearest his heart and to which he returned oftenest, was religion. Speaking of his illness he



said, with a smile, that he had gained so much by it, that 'I can only wish you all to be ill!'

He compared his recovery to being painfully dragged out of a bog into which he had nearly sunk, and into which he had to return before long, and again to sink, before reaching the other side.

He spoke of love as the motive power of life. God is Love. We cannot increase the measure we possess, and should not try to force it. How can we control that which controls us? But we can remove all that hinders it; and can pay attention to it, recognising its importance.

To hear this rugged old man, with his shaggy, prominent eyebrows, piercing eyes, and ruthless criticisms, insisting earnestly on the supreme importance of love, was rather strange. One feels, as in the similar case of St. Paul, that the tribute is the greater because uttered by one who impresses us primarily not by his power of sympathy, but by his intellectual force. Yet I must not leave that remark unqualified, for in his old age Tolstoy has grown milder and kindlier year by year, and now it is perhaps the love in him—more even than the intellect—that impresses one.

I cannot adequately describe the peaceful yet animated atmosphere of that home, crowded with vital interests, throbbing with life, overrun with visitors, but so influenced by the high and earnest tone of the great man they all looked up to, that I felt it more bracing and more peaceful than any circle I was ever in; and I see that, on leaving, I jotted down in my notebook: 'A remarkable and kindly family, apart from Tolstoy's genius. His influence is felt in the simplicity, frankness, kindness, and consideration shown to all in the place.'

It was a fine moonlight night when I left Yásnaya and set out to catch the midnight train. The undulating country looked beautiful, the air was sweet and still: and as, full of thoughts of Tolstoy and of the others with whom I had had friendly intercourse, I made my way toward the wayside station, I came to a place near a wood where there

was a splendid echo. To test it some sweet voice in the distance sang. 'I—love—you,' and the echo answered clearly: 'I—love—you!' It seemed a fitting sequel to a visit which remains in my memory as one of the most stimulating times in my life.

The stuffy, dirty, unpunctual, and overcrowded train which took me back to Moscow, seemed specially designed to emphasise Tolstoy's indictment of modern civilisation.

People have often talked of discord between Tolstoy and his family, but I have myself seen many more proofs of the affection and esteem in which he is held by them. Here, for instance, is a letter of 10th September 1902, from his daughter, Mary—to whom I had sent a letter which I carelessly addressed to the 'Countess M. L. Tolstoy':

Notwithstanding your mistake in the address, everything reached me safely. You are not the only one who uses my maiden name in addressing me. It is very strange, but though I have been married five years, I very often receive letters addressed to 'M. L. Tolstoy.' The post-office officials are accustomed to this, and send them on to me without delay, and I like it very much, for it seems to me that it shows an unwillingness to separate me from my father. . . .

All goes well with us. My father feels well, in spite of the fearful weather. He is working very much and successfully.

We had a consultation of doctors recently about the winter, and decided that while he feels well, it is better not to go away from here; and so he will spend the winter at Yásnaya Polyána. My husband and I shall, of course, also remain here.

On 1st November Tolstoy completed his scathing *Appeal to the Clergy* (*Essays and Letters*) which certainly hits them fifty times harder than the Excommunication hit him. Since Luther indicted the Catholic Church for the sale of Indulgences, probably no indictment so full of moral indignation against a shameful trafficking in falsehood has ever been hurled at any body of men.

His health, all this time, remained very uncertain,  
1903 and on 21st January 1903, his eldest son, Count  
Sergius, wrote me :

At present my father is ill. He had influenza, which passed, but weakened him greatly. He is now suffering from his liver, and from occasional weakening of the heart's action. . . .

That spring, the Dorpat (Yúrief) University having selected Tolstoy and Father John of Cronstadt for Honorary Degrees, some sensation was caused by the priest's reply that 'he did not wish to be in the same category with an infidel.'

In April, Tolstoy published letters protesting against the Jew-baiting and pogróms in Kishinéf and Gómel. In these letters he expresses abhorrence of :

the real culprit in the whole matter, namely our Government, with its priesthood which stupefies the people and makes fanatics of them, and its robber-band of officials. The Kishinéf crime is a direct consequence of the propaganda of lies and violence carried on with such intensity and insistence by the Russian Government.

The attitude of the Government in this affair is only a fresh proof of its coarse egotism, which does not stop at any cruelty to repress a movement it thinks dangerous, and of its complete indifference (comparable to that of the Turkish Government towards the Armenian massacres) to the most terrible cruelties, so long as its own interests are not involved.

He contributed *Esarhaddon* and two other short stories (all included in *Twenty-three Tales*) for the relief of the sufferers in those riots.

On 6th May, he wrote me :

How good it would be if your friendly relations with Tchertkóf were renewed! As far as I can, I will try to co-operate thereto.

My health is better than I expected. I work a little, but less than I expected or desire. I should like now to write things that need not be published during my life, but questions continually crop up to which it seems necessary to reply. Such

is the question concerning the activity of the Revolutionaries, and on that theme I have written a small article in the form of an *Afterword* to my letter, *To the Working-People*. I now want to write about the materialistic mood people are in, and about Nietzsche, etc.

Semyónof, apropos of Nietzsche, once remarked to Tolstoy: 'Nowadays people treat all their talents frivolously, and recognise no obligation towards any one. That is seen by the men they put forward as heroes. Of late, great attention has been paid to Leonardo da Vinci. Volýnsky has written a whole book about him, which no doubt is an important work; but when one considers the personality of Da Vinci as shown in it, it turns out that he had no bases: no problems of the soul. Yet he is represented as a model of the Superman.'

'It all comes from Nietzsche!' said Tolstoy. 'He was a real madman, but what a talent! I was absolutely charmed by his language when I first read him. What vigour and what beauty! I was so carried away that I forgot myself. Then I came to, and began to digest it all. Great God, what savagery! It is terrible, so to drag down Christianity!'

'But,' said a visitor, 'Christianity has long been dragged down; Nietzsche only gave it the finishing blow!'

'I know that very well,' said Tolstoy. 'When I first began to speak about Christianity, it was considered so absurd that even our parish priest turned his back on me, and Boborýkin [the novelist] and Mihaylóvsky [the critic] ceased to visit us. . . . Timiriázef [K. A. T., writer on Darwinism] once said to me that religion is needed, as a scaffolding is needed by those who are building a house; but once the house is built, the scaffolding is carted away. . . . Our house, however, is not yet finished, and they already want to pull down the scaffolding!'

Another conversation of Tolstoy's, in June 1903, with Andréyevitch (who has since written a Monograph about him) may serve to show how far his theoretic solution of

the social problem had led him since 1882, when he appealed so earnestly to Moscow society to abolish poverty from its midst. Andréyevitch had been visiting the Hítrof Market (described in *What Then Must We Do?*) but Tolstoy did not now wish to hear anything about it.

'Why did you want to go there? . . . I don't understand,' said he, with some irritation. '*Bosyaki* [barefooters] they always have been, and will long continue to be! They drink, and are lazy, and that is all. . . . People have invented a new fashion—slumming!'

'No doubt it is so, Leo Nikoláyevitch. But all the same, the Hítrof Market is a pit into which many of our brother authors fall; and so it has a terror of its own, and when one glances at it—one's head whirls. . . .'

'Then it's simply out of curiosity, and a bad curiosity at that! One has no business to fall into it at all! Perhaps one should not even glance at it, since one has no business there. It's simply a fashion. . . . People who couldn't think of anything better, have invented these "barefooters." . . . They are lost souls, with whom you will, and can, do nothing; and I don't understand how it is people are not tired of fussing over them.'

An article Tolstoy wrote in 1890 on the assassination of King Humbert, entitled *Thou Shalt Not Kill!*, was prohibited in Russia; and at Leipzig, in July 1903, on the demand of the Public Prosecutor, the German edition of it was seized for *lèse majesté* and was destroyed.

The following is the passage the prosecution relied on:

What, indeed, must be going on in the head of some Wilhelm of Germany—a narrow-minded, ill-educated, vain man, with the ideals of a German Junker—when there is nothing he can say so stupid or horrid that it will not be met by an enthusiastic '*Hoch!*' and be commented on by the press of the whole world as though it were something highly important? When he says that, at his word, soldiers should be ready to kill their own fathers, people shout '*Hoch!*' When he

says that the Gospel must be introduced with an iron fist—‘*Hoch!*’ When he says the army is to take no prisoners in China, but to slaughter everybody, he is not put in a lunatic asylum, but people shout ‘*Hoch!*’ and set sail for China to execute his commands. (*Essays and Letters*, p. 266.)

The day after his seventy-fifth birthday, Tolstoy went out riding, and at the crossing of a ravine, wishing to spare his horse, he got off and led it by the bridle. While he was doing so, it trod on his foot, and the result was sufficiently serious to prevent his walking for some time after, and to oblige him to have recourse to his bath-chair.

During the last few years Tolstoy's articles have generally turned on Non-Resistance, and he has come to treat his doctrine—that the use of physical force between man and man is always wrong, and always indicates malevolence—as an axiom on the basis of which all political, social and economic questions can be solved. The more of these articles I translated, the more I felt that I should prefer to state the case differently, and to lay the accent not on the use of physical force, but on the  *motive* . I believe malevolence to be always bad; but I think that to be ready to use physical force is sometimes the best thing we can do. At last I felt that I ought to tell Tolstoy wherein I disagreed with the articles I was translating. In reply

1904 to my letter he wrote me, on 20th January 1904:

Your last letter . . . has much astonished and, I confess, grieved me. To struggle with all one's strength against evil, and to wish to serve one's neighbour, has nothing in common with the principle of Non-Resistance to evil by violence, and I do not at all understand why you contrast the one with the other. However, I have so often written and spoken about that, that you must please forgive me if I do not speak about it any more.

A few days ago I sent Tchertkóf a small Preface to the projected Biography of Garrison. There I write about this matter, and have said all I could; and I can add nothing to it

—except to repeat what I wrote long ago. I think if you analyse your arguments you will find the mistake you are making. If you do not find it yourself, no one, and least of all I, can point it out to you.

Having confessed my heterodoxy, I did not, and do not, feel called upon to harp on it. It is, after all, the things one can agree about that are the most important. If Tolstoy's way of stating the Non-Resistant principle be as valid as he believes, then in that matter I fail sadly as an interpreter; but biographers—like other people—have their limitations: *feci quod potui, faciant meliora potentes*.

The events then occurring in Russia were such as to grieve Tolstoy profoundly. There was the useless, disastrous, and shameful war with Japan, which outraged not only his religious principles, but also a latent patriotism, the existence of which he had hardly suspected in himself, until he nearly wept at the news of the fall of Port Arthur.

*Bethink Yourselves!*, a vigorous denunciation of that war and of war in general, was written in May 1904.

Tolstoy has expressed his ideas in a great variety of literary forms. He had given us stories, novels, plays, sketches, essays, lay-sermons, legends, expositions, translations, disquisitions, and letters of all sorts and sizes; and he now turned his attention to making Collections of extracts from the works of great thinkers, confirming and elucidating his own outlook on life. His first volume of that kind was entitled *Thoughts of Wise Men*, and was finished in 1904.

With the Japanese war came a rapid growth of the Revolutionary movement in Russia, accompanied by enthusiasm and self-sacrifice, but also by venom, confusion and crime. To some of us, the outstanding need of the situation appeared to be the establishment of a Constitutional Government, which would make law supreme over the caprice of any official and even over the action of the Tsar

himself, while at the same time checking the excesses of unwise reformers by an authority based on public opinion. Despite her magnificent artistic and literary achievements, we felt Russia to be politically a century or two behind Western Europe, and we believed that Government by discussion must replace Government by caprice, before a good rule can be hoped for. We thought that if Constitutional Government does not immediately bring wise legislation, it tends at least to produce in people the state of mind on which alone an order can be established which is firm, but yet gives scope for improvements carried on with a sense of continuity and security.

Feeling in this way, our sympathies went out particularly to those Leaders of the *Zémstvo* movement who by practical experience in Local Government had realised what an insuperable barrier to all true progress is the irresponsible power of Court nominees, entrenched above the law; but who also realised how complex, slow, and difficult a matter is legislation, and how large a part compromise, patience, and expediency must play in the achievement of practical reforms.

The dangerous people were: on the one hand, the Tsar's *entourage*, fighting to hold their places, power, and perquisites, and to escape the exposure Parliamentary Government would involve; and, on the other hand, the zealots who were not prepared to put up with such measures of reform as the mass of the nation were prepared to understand and approve of, and who wished by a *coup-de-main* to inflict a millennium on the people.

At that moment of doubt and confusion, there was no man in Russia whose word would have been more useful to the Constitutionalists, had he cared to support them, than Tolstoy. He had repeatedly and scathingly condemned the Tsardom and its methods; not less uncompromisingly had he denounced the Revolutionary movement, and the Socialists, and all appeals to force. To many it seemed that the logic of the situation must oblige him to throw his weight on the side of the



Constitutional reformers—the Zémstvo leaders, Shipóf's people, the moderate, practical, experienced, and efficient workers who were claiming for themselves a larger sphere of national usefulness. But no! On them, too, fell Tolstoy's condemnation; and in a cablegram to the *North American Review*, which was a bitter disappointment and aroused a great deal of indignation, he said, in December 1904, in reply to an inquiry that magazine had addressed to him:

Object Zémstvo agitation, restriction of despotism and establishment of representative Government. Will the agitation Leaders attain their aim or only continue stirring public? In both cases sure result of whole matter will be delay of true social amelioration. True social amelioration can be attained only by religious moral perfecting of all individuals. Political agitation, putting before individuals pernicious illusion of social improvement by change of forms, habitually stops the real progress, as can be observed in all Constitutional countries—France, England, America.

No doubt the religious and moral regeneration of individuals is a very essential preliminary or concomitant of 'true social amelioration'; and it is also true that men often become so absorbed in the business of politics, as to lose sight of the ends which all political activity should serve; but by setting up an antithesis between politics on the one hand, and religious and moral regeneration on the other, Tolstoy evades the issue Russia has to face: namely that of Absolutism *versus* Constitutionalism. Religious and moral regeneration may be, has been, and often is, the motive inciting to political reform; and the contrast Tolstoy dwells on seems to me no more valid than it would be for an architect to decline to consider the general plans of a building, on the ground that everything depends on the quality of the bricks of which the edifice is built.

Apart from the trend of his philosophy, there is something in Tolstoy's temperament which disposes him to oppose all movements and associations composed of men with mixed motives, and that are not quite what they pro-

fess to be. In other words, he is disposed to resist all movements that comprise large numbers of human beings—as Churches and political parties naturally do. Perhaps I can best render his attitude towards politics intelligible, by quoting the words of a very thoughtful Englishman, who arrived at a somewhat similar conclusion, though he was not so emphatic or denunciatory. This is what William Clarke said :

The work of true social reformers lies at present in an ethical, not in a political, direction. By this I do not mean that the reformer should retire from the world, or that he should not give his aid to any piece of public political work which, on careful reflection, seems to him to make his way. But he should understand what a superficial matter all this political activity is. I speak as one who is intimately acquainted with it, and who has given much time of his life to political causes. Had I my life over again, I would not spend five minutes on such surface matters, which leave mankind very much where they were. We need a new moral heroism like that which informed the foundation of the great monastic establishments of Western Europe. It was they, and not the secular powers, which really founded the civilisation of the new Europe after the wreck of Rome. . . . We cannot revive the old forms, but we want the old spirit—the spirit which held that the righteous life and the righteous ordering of social affairs are first, and that nothing must be permitted to stand in their way. We need also the spirit of moral heroism, the spirit of ethical adventure which leads men to embrace hardship and seeming loss so that the will of the Spirit of Goodness may be fulfilled in us. Till they can bring about again something of that old energy, wise and far-seeing men will do well not to bother much about politics.

A glimpse of the strain to which Tolstoy was exposed at this time is given in a letter the Princess M. L. Obolénsky wrote me from Pirogóvo, on 22nd January 1905 :

I have lately returned from Yásnaya, where I spent two months. My father was well, but he is tormented by demands

made on him to take part in current events. The Liberals want to draw him into their camp, the Conservatives into theirs, and the Revolutionists into theirs, and he does not belong to any one of them, and only asks to be left in peace. People do not understand and do not admit his point of view, and think that in consequence of what is happening in Russia he must come down from his Christian standpoint and say something new, and something they want him to say.

In general the war and all that is now happening in Russia is depressing, and weighs like a heavy burden on us all.

One of the charming and admirable things about Tolstoy is his many-sidedness, the keenness of his enthusiasms, and his readiness to be delighted. This often enables him to throw off his depression, though things concur to oppress and disappoint him. So that month, when—added to all the trouble at home and abroad—came Bloody Sunday: the day when the workmen, led by Gapon to petition the Tsar, were shot down in the streets of Petersburg—he wrote me:

Yesterday and to-day I have been reading Edward Carpenter's book, *Civilisation: its Cause and Cure*, and am enraptured by it. Till now I only knew the article *Modern Science* out of it.

You will very much oblige me by sending me a copy of that book. Please also inform me of what you know about Carpenter himself. I consider him a worthy successor to Carlyle and Ruskin.

During 1905 he wrote a number of articles applying the doctrine of Non-Resistance to the questions of the hour: *How to Free the Workers*, *The One Thing Needful*, *A Great Iniquity* (this referred to landholding), *The End of the Age*, and *The Crisis in Russia*; and he began a fresh series of short stories including *Kornéy Vasílyef*, *A Prayer*, and *Strawberries*. These he followed up in 1906 with *What For?* and *God's and Man's*, besides writing further articles on the Revolution. He also compiled *A Circle of Reading*, to which he attaches great importance, and in which, following

up the path he had begun a couple of years before, he has gathered together freely-rendered quotations and extracts from writers of all lands.

Tolstoy's unwillingness to take on himself the moral responsibility attaching to the management of money matters, sometimes worked out very curiously. For instance, the proceeds from the sale of *Resurrection* 1906 were undoubtedly mainly the fruits of his labour; yet merely because my wife had translated the book and I was acting as honorary secretary for the *Resurrection* Fund Committee who controlled the expenditure of the money received from the English and American editions, I received letters—sometimes even from members of the Tolstoy family—thanking me for donations made from that Fund, as though the generosity had been mine and not his. For instance, on 15th June 1906, his daughter, the Princess Obolensky, wrote me :

Nearly every day I have occasion to remember you with gratitude and to receive thanks for you from poor people, and I want to write to you about it. When we returned this year to the country we found ourselves, after last year's bad harvest, the war, and from other causes, surrounded by peasants who were in great and real need. As a result of the extraordinarily dry summer, there were, too, continual fires; and thanks to your money, we were often able to ease the position people were in, and to help in cases of acute need. There were unfortunate children with no milk in consequence of the loss of cattle by murrain, for whom we helped to buy a cow; there were burnt-out peasants who were able with the aid of your money to build brick huts instead of wooden ones. (One man in particular was wretched and touching. He had been burnt out two years running, and could not build himself a brick hut because he was always too poor, but after this year's fire he decided at any cost to put up a brick one. He sold everything he had, all his cattle, and hired himself out as a labourer, and when he learnt how much the fire-insurance payment would be, it turned out that he would not have enough. Then he came to us to ask for a loan, My husband talked

with him, and when that old peasant-householder, a sober and industrious man, spoke of the fact that he would again have to build a wooden hut, he could not control himself, but wept. He, a bearded man, long shook with sobs over the thirty shillings that he lacked. And it was your money that helped him.) There were soldiers' wives with children, who had simply to be supported till their husbands' return; and so on. And so, receiving continual thanks for this aid, and wishes of all that is good for the donor, I want to pass this gratitude on to you. I still have a good deal of your money, and I know that I shall in future have many opportunities to hear this gratitude expressed; and I personally thank you for having with this money freed me from frequently being obliged to refuse petitioners, when it has not been possible for me to give.

Tolstoy, feeling that his time was short and that there was much he wished to accomplish, continued to work very diligently whenever his health allowed him to do so. On 20th August I received from him a letter which partly expresses the struggle between the weakness of his flesh and the keenness of his spirit:

I am very, very much to blame, dear Maude. Two letters of yours have long lain before me unanswered. Please do not be angry with me on that account. The reason was that I have spells which succeed one another: first of loss of mental energy, when I cannot rouse myself to write the simplest letter, and then of special energy, when I give myself up to my work—of which there is very much. I have just passed through two such periods.

To your first letter about the £600 [*Resurrection* Fund money] which you offer me, I think this: I do not just now see a possibility of using it unquestionably well. Therefore if you do not find for it any such unquestionably good use, and until you find it, put the money in the Bank. If a chance to use it presents itself to me, I will write you.

As to X. [an English editor who had been at Yásnaya before and wished to go again] I shall be particularly glad of his visit. It will remove the misunderstandings which arose accidentally, probably by my fault.

I have not yet read your book [*A Peculiar People*] but will certainly do so. The story of the Doukhobórs is very interesting and important up to the present, and will, I think, be yet more interesting and instructive in the future.

A few days later the even tenor of life at Yásnaya Polyána was disturbed by the Countess falling very seriously ill. Tolstoy was greatly distressed. He said to her one day: 'Now that you are laid up and do not go about the house, I miss the sound of your footstep; and do you know, missing that, I can neither read nor write properly!' When, however, on 2nd September, the doctor in charge announced that an operation they had had in view for some time for the removal of an intestinal gathering must be performed at once, or the patient would die, and die in agony,—an unwillingness to incur a moral responsibility, similar to that which has caused him to renounce property, showed itself in his reply. He said:

I am pessimistic about my wife's health. She is suffering from a serious illness. The great, solemn and touching moment of death approaches, and we ought to submit to the will of God. . . . I am opposed to an interference which, in my opinion, infringes the solemnity of the great event. . . . We must all die to-day, to-morrow, or in five years. . . . I understand that you, as a doctor, cannot act otherwise, and I stand aside: I am neither for nor against it. My children are assembling; my eldest son, Sergius, will be here. . . . Let them decide how to act. . . . Sophia Andréyevna herself must of course also be asked. If she has no objection, then you can do your business.

The Countess, whose sufferings were extreme, had all along been strongly in favour of the operation, and it was performed; and after three critical days the patient began to regain strength, and within a month was quite well: so well that when I visited Yásnaya Polyána a few weeks later, I never suspected that she had been so near to death's door, and was quite surprised subsequently to learn how great the danger had been.

When visiting Russia in 1902, I had found people everywhere extremely interested in Tolstoy: the man who had dared to reply to the Synod and to rebuke the Tsar. Now, in 1906, what a change! I had been a fortnight in Russia before visiting Yásnaya, and not one single person had spoken to me as every one had spoken of him four years before. Politics had become to most people as the breath of their nostrils, and consequently Tolstoy, who was telling them to leave politics alone, was to the Liberals a stumbling-block, and to the Socialists a snare. But while he was falling into such disesteem among the educated classes, the temporary relaxation of the Censorship, which followed the establishment of the October Constitution, enabled many of his didactic works to be printed and sold for the first time, and his influence spread into quarters it had not previously reached.

I had never before been at Yásnaya so late as the end of October, and the autumnal aspect of the scene as I drove through woodland and over pleasant undulating country for the two miles from Záseka station, may have had something to do with the impression that came over me when I reached Tolstoy's house.

The last time I had been there, it had been full of visitors coming and going day by day. Now I found only members of the family, the atmosphere was quieter, and the pulses of life seemed to throb less strongly. Tolstoy himself had been much better in health that summer, but at the time of my visit was suffering, as he frequently does, from digestive troubles. At lunch, some mention of Stolýpin caused him to tell of his friendship with the present Premier's father, his colleague in trying to start a paper for the Sevastopol garrison during the siege. He told with particular pleasure how the elder Stolýpin set to work to write his military memoirs, but becoming more and more convinced as he went on that war is a fearful evil, he finished by burning all he had written.

He then spoke of the Vyborg Manifesto, in which about

180 members of the first Douma, on the occasion of its suppression, appealed to the people to cease to pay taxes and to refuse military service. This, he said, seemed like following advice he has often given, but was in fact a totally different thing. The signers of the Manifesto said: 'Do not serve or pay this Government, but serve and pay us when we become the Government,' whereas his advice is: 'Do not pay or serve any Government at all.'

He went on to mention with approval an article written by Ouspénsky, one of the signers of that Manifesto. Apropos of the demand for religious toleration, Ouspénsky expressed the view that, as a necessary part of religious toleration, one must include toleration of refusals to serve in the army; and that such refusals, based on religious conviction, should be respected. One newspaper after another refused to publish the article, and when at last it was printed by the Mediator, their premises were promptly searched by gendarmes, and the article confiscated. 'It is remarkable,' said Tolstoy, 'that just this right to refuse to kill one's fellow-man, is the right that Governments are least inclined to grant and most afraid to discuss.' Nearly all Tolstoy's own works were, just at that time, being sold freely in Russia, but those aimed directly against military service were still suppressed.

During the afternoon, Tolstoy rode over to Toula on horseback. At the 6 o'clock dinner, vegetarian food was served as usual for him and for some other members of the family, as well as for me. He spent the evening with the family, one sign of the improvement in his health being that he again played chess; and I was told that he did so every evening that he could find a partner.

In an Appendix I give a game he won from me that evening, as well as one I won from him on my next visit.

It seems to me that Tolstoy shows an excellent sense of proportion in his way of playing chess. He does it well enough to make and to enjoy combinations, but he never sacrifices social family life for the sake of the game. Any



one may interrupt him while he is playing, and he talks and jests so that no one who only knew the game at Yásnaya, would consider chess unsocial. Previously I (who had made some study of the game) used generally to beat him; but on this occasion he won two games from me very rapidly.

After the chess, we had a long talk on many subjects. With the Russian Revolution, he expressed no sympathy at all. All *that*, he says, has been done long ago in other lands, with no particularly good results. 'People should remember that we all have to die, and must spend our strength not on useless strife, but on doing what is evidently good. A Revolution must either be something quite new, such as the abolition of *all* Government, or an imitation of what has been done before; and in the latter case it is sure to be bad. It is not worth having a Revolution merely to put some Petrunkévitch or Róditchef at the head of affairs.' Again and again he spoke of the astonishing blunder Governments make when they imagine it to be their business to rule and control people. If they confined themselves to *advising* people, it would be presumptuous enough, but would at least be better than what they do now. 'No improvement in a people's condition can be effected that does not rest on a *moral* basis,' said he, and for him it is a settled axiom that no political action can rest on such a basis. That is where he differs from such a man as Prince D. A. Hilkóf, who once wrote him: 'I admit that we all of us have to die, and that our work on earth should be to fulfil the will of God, as each of us understands that will. But why not admit that it is possible for men sincerely to believe that it is God's will that they should devote themselves to replacing the present Government of Russia by a better one?'

Speaking of Henry George's Single Tax System with approval, Tolstoy maintained (in opposition to a suggestion made by some one present) that such a tax would amply suffice, even in Russia, to meet all the expenses of Government. I had once before asked him how it was that, con-

demning all Government, he advocates a system which presupposes a great deal of Government, both to collect the tax and to spend the money collected. He replied that the question was a very fair one, but that it all depends on a man's plane of consciousness. His own mind worked on a No-Government plane, but as the great majority of men still believe in Governments and legality, 'let them, at least, see that they get good laws'; and among the best possible laws would be the Single Tax.

That reply silenced me at the time; but on reflection it seemed insufficient, and I now returned to the charge, and put it to him that progress may lead either towards the abolition of Government, or towards the organisation of more and better Government; but that we cannot progress in two contrary directions at one and the same time. The adoption of the Taxation of Land Values certainly does not make towards the abolition of Government, or the repudiation of the payment of taxes. To this he replied by asking what prevents voluntary payments to a voluntary administration? I did not pursue the matter; but I thought that landowners would not much object to a form of taxation which left them free to pay only what they pleased, nor would such taxation be likely to do much to benefit the peasants, whose hard fate Tolstoy deploras.

I do not think he has worked out clearly in his own mind either the organisation by which the tax should be collected, or the organisation which should dispose of the money after it had been collected; but what he has seen quite clearly is that man being a land-animal, dependent on the soil for his subsistence, there can be no equality of opportunity among men so long as some are allowed to monopolise the natural opportunities of soil, sites, water-power, mines, etc., without rendering to the community a payment equivalent to the privileges they enjoy. On that point the Californian and Russian prophets are absolutely at one; and unless we are prepared to say that we wish to see an artificial inequality maintained to the end of all time, I think we must agree

with them, whatever reservations we may make as to the time or method of levelling the citadels of privilege.

The talk turned to literature, and Tolstoy expressed his high admiration of Swift and Goldsmith, saying: 'The more I try to read recent English writers, the more I admire Goldsmith; and among all the novelties, I recommend the *Vicar of Wakefield*.'

Speaking of social conditions he said that, if one draws the poverty-line, as English writers do, at the point at which a man cannot purchase food enough to maintain himself and his family in full working efficiency, one must class the whole peasant population of Russia among the poverty-stricken.

His mind was evidently quite vigorous, and his sympathies and antipathies keenly alive, but his efforts, it seemed to me, were largely concentrated on cultivating meekness and kindness and self-abnegation in himself. Among the many contrasts in his nature, one of the strangest is his readiness to decide such problems as those of taxation and Government, while himself shrinking from handling wealth, or even directing the publication of his own writings. Men's consciences act very differently, and there are some who feel assured that they have a right to deal with their own property, but shrink from judging the actions of those who hold positions of authority in Church and State. Perhaps the nearest we can get to the ultimate truth of these matters is, that a moral responsibility attaches both to the performance and to the neglect of these things; and that it may be right both to administer property and to judge men and institutions, provided that we try to administer wisely, and to 'judge righteous judgments.' What needs to be remembered is the enormous difficulty, as Gladstone said, 'of attempting to take on ourselves the functions of the Eternal Judge (except in reference to ourselves . . .)' and to form any accurate idea of relative merit and demerit, good or evil, in actions. The shades of the rainbow are not so nice, and

the sands of the seashore are not such a multitude, as are all the subtle, shifting, blending forms of thought and of circumstances that go to determine the character of us and of our acts.' The recognition of our incompetence to judge accurately, is one of the great helps to charity; but yet, to try to discriminate between the honest man and the knave, is an act of elementary justice to our neighbour; and if, after doing our best, we honestly misjudge, it is an intellectual but not a moral fault that we commit.

After I ceased to live in Russia, with each succeeding visit to Yásnaya I was more and more conscious that my life in England had drawn me away from Tolstoy's point of view on practical matters; but this did not at all diminish either my personal affection or my profound respect for him.

The lapse of years has made his earnest and whole-hearted nature more transparent than ever. If, at times, I regret his isolation, and think that some of his views would have been modified had he stood nearer to the common experience of ordinary men, I recall his own remark that 'God needs our limitations!' He could perhaps not have done his marvellous literary work, nor set so wonderful an example of unworldliness, had he been plunged in the turmoil of everyday life, soiling his hands with the rough work of business or politics. His achievements and limitations are knit together, and as we could not afford to forgo the one, we must not demur at the other.

On 26th November 1906, a great trial befell him. His daughter, Mary, Princess Obolénsky, who had been in poor health for some years, died at Yásnaya Polyána of pneumonia, after a very short illness. I am sure that the news of her death inflicted a keen sense of personal loss on many, for all who knew her recognised her charm, ability, sincerity and kindness. I only had some three or four intimate talks with her, yet when the news reached me, I felt that I had lost a dear personal friend; and I can never now think of Yásnaya without a pang, knowing that, though I may

revisit the place, I shall never be welcomed there by her again.

1907 In May 1907, his eldest daughter, Tatiána, Madame Soohoteén, wrote me :

My father read your letter with great interest and pleasure, and told me to write to you and thank you for it. He himself latterly gets very easily tired, and therefore tries to do less mental work. During the last two months he has had two fainting fits with complete loss of memory, which in general has been getting much weaker with him.

He says that he is glad of it, and that he only forgets all that is unnecessary, but remembers what is necessary. And that is perfectly true: in the moments after his faint, when he had quite forgotten all external affairs, he remembered that he had to be amiable to us all, and not grieve us by refusing to do what we wanted him to do for his health's sake.

He has been reading Shaw, and has marked just the place about which you write in your letter [namely, the Salvation Army scene in *Major Barbara*]. . . .

In speaking of the last few years, the things chiefly to be remarked, are the increasing gentleness of the great man, the tenderness of his conscience, and the tenacity with which—unswayed by what has gone on in Russia—he has held to his principles.

As has been already mentioned, his disposal of his property has not saved him from being continually pestered by applications for assistance; and on 30th September 1907 he sent a letter to the papers which speaks for itself:

More than twenty years ago, acting on certain personal considerations, I renounced the possession of property. The landed estates that belonged to me I handed over to my heirs as though I were dead. I also renounced my rights in my works, and those written after 1881 became common property. The money I still control, consists of sums I occasionally receive (chiefly from abroad) for the relief of the famine-stricken in certain districts, and such small sums as some people place at my disposal to be dealt with at my discretion. I devote these,

in my near neighbourhood, to aiding widows, orphans and people left destitute after fires and similar misfortunes.

Yet this disposal by me of these small amounts, and the frivolous correspondence about me in the papers, have misled and still mislead many people, who more and more frequently address themselves to me for monetary aid. The motives of these appeals are very various, ranging from most frivolous to most serious and touching ones. The most frequent are requests for money to enable youths to finish their education—that is to say, to obtain a diploma; the most touching are requests for help for families left in miserable poverty.

Having no means wherewith to satisfy these demands, I tried sending short written refusals, expressing regret at not being able to meet the requests. But in reply I generally received fresh letters, angry and reproachful. I also tried not answering, but I again received angry letters reproaching me for not doing so. What is important is not these reproaches, but the painful feeling which the writers must experience.

I therefore now find it necessary to request all those who are in need of pecuniary assistance not to address themselves to me, as I have positively no property at my disposal to give them. Less than any one else can I satisfy such requests. If I really have acted as I declare—that is, if I have ceased to possess property—it is impossible for me to give monetary aid to those who appeal for it; and if I am deceiving people when I say that I have renounced property, and in reality continue to control it, then it is still less possible to expect aid from such a man.

He continued to work at the *Circle of Reading*, revising and improving it from year to year with the same care that he puts into his own writings. Indeed, in addition to the matter selected from other writers, the book contains a number of stories and articles by himself.

During these last years, he has again held classes for village children. He reads and tells them stories and legends, and speaks of life and its duties. From these 1908 classes, in 1908, grew his book, *The Teaching of Jesus*, of which mention was made in a previous chapter.

His most striking utterance during that year was the article, *I Cannot Be Silent*, protesting against the hangings employed by the Government not merely for the suppression, but after the suppression, of the Revolution. Tolstoy's detestation of violence and his desire to protest against a very terrible present evil, united in that article—which was written with intense feeling, and produced a tremendous sensation. Owing to some blunder it has been published in England under the title of 'The Hanging Tsar,' which was not the name Tolstoy gave it.

It contains an account of how men were being hanged by the dozen—with cords well-soaped 'to tighten better round their throats'—and one is made acutely conscious of the suffering Tolstoy's conscience inflicted on him for his own connection with the ruling classes. Towards the end he says:

I frankly confess it: I hope my exposure of those men will, one way or other, evoke the expulsion I desire from the set in which I am now living, and in which I cannot but feel myself to be a participator in the crimes committed around me.

Everything now being done in Russia is done in the name of the general welfare, in the name of the protection and tranquillity of the inhabitants of Russia. And if this be so, then it is also all done for me, who live in Russia. For me, therefore, exists the destitution of the people, deprived of the first, most natural right of man—the right to use the land on which he is born; for me the half-million men torn away from wholesome peasant life and dressed in uniforms and taught to kill; for me that false so-called priesthood, whose chief duty it is to pervert and conceal true Christianity; for me all these transportations of men from place to place; for me these hundreds of thousands of hungry workmen wandering about Russia; for me these hundreds of thousands of unfortunates dying of typhus and scurvy in the fortresses and prisons which do not suffice for such a multitude; for me the mothers, wives and fathers of the exiles, the prisoners, and those who are hanged, are suffering; for me these dozens and hundreds of men have been shot; for me the horrible work goes on of these hangmen, at first enlisted with difficulty, but who now no longer so loathe their work;

for me exist these gallows, with well-soaped cords from which hang women, children and peasants; for me exists this terrible embitterment of man against his fellow-man.

Strange as is the statement that all this is done for me, and that I am a participator in these terrible deeds, I cannot but feel that there is an indubitable interdependence between my spacious room, my dinner, my clothing, my leisure, and these terrible crimes committed to get rid of those who would like to take from me what I use. And though I know that these homeless, embittered, depraved people—who but for the Government's threats would deprive me of all I am using—are products of that same Government's actions, still I cannot help feeling that, at present, my peace really is dependent on all the horrors that are now being perpetrated by the Government.

And being conscious of this, I can no longer endure it, but must free myself from this intolerable position!

It is impossible to live so! I, at any rate, cannot and will not live so.

That is why I write this, and will circulate it by all means in my power, both in Russia and abroad, that one of two things may happen: either that these inhuman deeds may be stopped, or that my connection with them may be snapped, and I put in prison, where I may be clearly conscious that these horrors are not committed on my behalf; or, still better (so good that I dare not even dream of such happiness) they may put on me, as on those twenty or twelve peasants [whose fate I have mentioned] a shroud and a cap, and may push me also off a bench, so that by my own weight I may tighten the well-soaped noose round my old throat.

This protest struck a note which besides being noble and courageous, was in harmony with the feelings of the great bulk of intelligent Russians. It served as a bond of spiritual union between Tolstoy and the Liberal elements of society, and paved the way for the strong and general manifestations of sympathy that reached him later that year.

In spite of the risks they ran, a number of Russian newspapers ventured to print the whole or part of Tolstoy's



protest, and different newspapers paid the penalty in fines amounting in various cases to from Rs. 200 to Rs. 3000 each. In one case (in Sevastopol) an editor was arrested and a printing establishment closed, for publishing it.

Tolstoy was eighty years old on 28th August old style (10th September new style) 1908. There had been much talk beforehand of how to honour him on that occasion: but he strongly objected to any ceremony, and hearing that an acquaintance of his, who had been sent to prison for six months for circulating some of his writings, had suggested that the best way to celebrate the jubilee would be by sending Tolstoy himself to prison as the author of works for which others were being punished, he wrote, on 27th March, cordially approving of the suggestion and saying:

Nothing really would so fully satisfy me, or give me such pleasure, as to be put in prison—in a real, good, stinking, cold, hungry prison. . . . Latterly I have felt so thoroughly happy, that I often wondered whether there was anything I still could wish for. And I could think of nothing. Now I cannot refrain from longing, with my whole soul, that what you suggest should be adopted not as a joke, but as a course which would really satisfy all those to whom my writings and their circulation is unpleasant, and would at the same time afford me in my old age, before death comes, true happiness and satisfaction, while releasing me entirely from the threatened burden of the forthcoming jubilee.

Since the suppression of the Revolutionary movement there has been a marked change in the official attitude towards Tolstoy's works. In 1905-6, as already mentioned, considerable liberty of printing was allowed, but since then the Authorities have become extremely strict, and there has been a whole series of persecutions and confiscations, fines and imprisonments, directed against those guilty of possessing, lending, distributing or publishing Tolstoy's anti-Governmental and anti-army-service works. Tolstoy has, again and again, written to those concerned: Ministers, Judges and Public Prosecutors, calling on them to recognise



COUNTESS S. A. TOLSTOY.

*From a photograph taken in 1908.*



him as the chief culprit, and to deal with him accordingly. But the Government—always, in his case, ‘ready to wound, but yet afraid to strike’—still persecutes his adherents and leaves him alone. This attitude showed itself especially on the eve of his eightieth birthday. The Holy Synod warned the faithful against honouring the heretic, and instructed the clergy to circulate publications denouncing him. The civil authorities took steps (varying in different provinces) to prevent the municipal authorities, schools, and literary and other societies from doing him honour. His secretary, Gousef, was arrested and banished. Father John of Cronstadt prayed for Tolstoy’s death, and the ultra-patriotic ‘Black Gang’ Congress held in July in Moscow under the presidency of the Archimandrite Makarius, announced its determination to take active steps to ‘prevent any celebration; to require priests from the pulpit of every church to warn their congregations against taking part in one; to arrange counter-demonstrations in the streets, and to forcibly stop any favourable manifestations.’

For a while it seemed as though celebrations would have to be held in the spirit of Herzen’s toast to the Polish patriot-poet Mickiewicz, when he rose at a banquet and drank ‘to the great name which must not be spoken’; but as the day approached, the Ministers faltered, and eventually the indications of respect and affection for Tolstoy were for the most part neither prevented nor punished, and they were so numerous and cordial as to be very impressive. Most of the newspapers devoted a great part—and in some cases even the whole—of their space on that day to articles dealing with Tolstoy’s career, and some two thousand congratulatory telegrams reached Yásnaya, where the great writer was then recovering from another attack of illness.

Among the truest things said on that occasion was the remark, that whatever conflict there might be between Tolstoy’s views and those of the political reformers, when it came to a test, the foes of Liberty were found to be his foes, and the friends of Liberty his friends.

A month later, Tolstoy wrote a letter approving of the candidature for the Presidency of the United States, of W. J. Bryan, who had visited Yásnaya some time before, and who had got on with Tolstoy very well. Tolstoy's relation to politics is so perplexing a feature in his life, that the letter is worth recording:

28 Sept. '08.

DEAR MR. RYERSON JENNINGS,—In answer to your letter of 24 August I can sincerely say that I wish Mr. Bryan success in his candidature to the Presidency of the United States.

From my own standpoint, repudiating as it does all coercive Government, I naturally cannot acquiesce with the position of President of the Republic; but since such functions still exist, it is obviously best that they should be occupied by individuals worthy of confidence.

Mr. Bryan I greatly respect and sympathise with, and know that the basis of his activity is kindred to mine in his sympathy with the interests of the working masses, his anti-militarism and his recognition of the fallacies produced by capitalism.

I do not know, but hope Mr. Bryan will stand for land reform according to the Single Tax system of Henry George, which I regard as being, at the present time, of the most insistent necessity, and which every progressive reformer should place to the fore.—Yours faithfully,

LEO TOLSTOY.

Readers conversant with the Taxation of Land Values movement, will be aware that even the most ardent Henry Georgeites do not now, generally, advocate a 'Single Tax' system. What they aim at is the payment to the State of the whole (or a large part) of the value of the natural opportunities monopolised by private individuals. They do not say that there should be no tax on anything else. But I have already pointed out that Tolstoy's interest in this matter is based on the broad underlying principle, and is not much concerned with the manner of its application.

A letter much more truly characteristic of Tolstoy, was

one he wrote towards the end of the year, to a lady member of the sect of Old Believers who had written to him in a spirit of virulent hostility, ending her epistle with the words: 'Yes, Leo Nikoláyevitch, I would shoot you for your blasphemous writings, and would ruthlessly execute all your followers, had I the power!'

His reply, written on 16th December, was as follows;

DEAR SISTER,—I received your letter, for which I thank you because it gave me great delight. It is joyful to see in you a truly religious woman, desirous of living according to the law of God. As to the necessity of so living, I am at one with you. That is why our spiritual communion is possible, because we are at one on the main thing. But further on we disagree. I think a man can only fulfil God's law by setting an example of good life, by purifying himself from evil, and increasing the good. All that he does to please God beside this is a delusion; it is false service and diverts him from the true purpose of life. To progress even by small steps, constant effort and strenuous attention are needed. Therefore a man must spend all his strength in trying to improve, without wasting his force on anything else. God has given man everything needful for moral progress. He has given conscience which warns us from evil doing, and reason with which to discriminate good from evil.

'The Kingdom of God is won by effort,' said Christ; and that kingdom is not without, but within us.

I like one other thing in your letter. It is your humility when you speak of yourself. But when you speak of your religion this humility disappears. You seem to think that you and those who taught you, are the only people who know the truth, and that all the rest are lost. I do not think I am the only person who knows the truth and that every one else is in darkness. I am eighty years old, and I am still searching for truth. Your teachers have misled you into the sin of pride and condemnation. Every man in the depths of his soul has something he alone comprehends, namely his attitude toward God. And this sphere is sacred. We must not attempt to invade it or to imagine that we know all that lies hidden in its depths.

All that you write of your life interests me very much. May God help you to fulfil His will alone. Then He will be with you; and when God is with us, all is well.

You say you regret not having read enough of my writings. If you are really interested in them I will send them to you with pleasure. Good-bye, and forgive me. Write to me. Your letters are not only interesting to me, but are of use to my soul.—Yours lovingly,

LEO TOLSTOY.

Further correspondence resulted in the lady discarding her narrow sectarianism, and adopting Tolstoy's point of view.

Early the next year, V. Tchertkóf, who had returned to Russia in 1908, and had settled near Yásnaya, was banished by Administrative Order from the Province of Toúla.  
 1909 This was evidently done to remove him from Tolstoy, as he was allowed to live anywhere else he liked.

My last visit to Russia was in September 1909. Tchertkóf was then living near Moscow, and to visit him Tolstoy had come to that city, for the first time for more than eight years.

The exertion of travelling, the excitement caused by the crowds that assembled at the stations to see him, and the many impressions he received, were too much for his strength, and when after about a fortnight's absence he returned to Yásnaya, he had two fainting fits. A few days later I was allowed to go and see him, and when I inquired about his health, he replied: 'Always nearer to death, and that is good. At my age one cannot jump and run, and one's memory fails; but what of that? Physical and mental strength decrease, but something else (moral strength) greatly increases. I would on no account exchange what I am now, for what I was sixty years ago!'

He complained that his faculty for remembering names was failing, and that in writing he found it difficult to avoid repeating himself, as he could not remember what he had already said; but his conversation was still pointed, animated and vigorous, and he played chess in the evening,

almost as he had done when I first played with him, fifteen years before.

He was expecting to become a great-grandfather in a couple of months' time; his second son's daughter having married early that year.

He had been reading Bernard Shaw's plays, and said that Shaw is original, and many of his sayings are quite admirable and deserve to become quotations; but that he has the defect of *wishing* to be original and to take his readers by surprise. That is a pity. One desires to merge into the mind of an author one likes, and to do so is impossible if he is bent on saying unexpected things. Tolstoy was much interested to hear of the plot of *Blanco Posnet* (then not yet published), which he thought very promising—and he wished to read the play, because, as he said, to many people the working of man's conscience is the only proof of the existence of a God.

On my return to England, I told Shaw of this, and he sent Tolstoy the play, with a letter in which he said :

MY DEAR COUNT TOLSTOY,—I send you herewith, through our friend Aylmer Maude, a copy of a little play called *The Showing Up of Blanco Posnet*. 'Showing Up' is American slang for unmasking a hypocrite. In form it is a very crude melodrama, which might be played in a mining camp to the roughest audience.

It is, if I may say so, the sort of play that you do extraordinarily well. I remember nothing in the whole range of drama that fascinated me more than the old soldier in your *Power of Darkness*. One of the things that struck me in that play was the feeling that the preaching of the old man, right as he was, could never be of any use—that it could only anger his son and rub the last grains of self-respect out of him. But what the pious and good father could not do, the old rascal of a soldier did as if he was the voice of God. To me that scene where the two drunkards are wallowing in the straw, and the older rascal lifts the younger one above his cowardice and his selfishness, has an intensity of effect that no merely romantic



scene could possibly attain; and in *Blanco Posnet* I have exploited in my own fashion this mine of dramatic material which you were the first to open up to modern playwrights.

I will not pretend that its mere theatrical effectiveness was the beginning and end of its attraction for me. I am not an 'Art-for-Art's-sake' man, and would not lift my finger to produce a work of art if I thought there was nothing more than that in it. It has always been clear to me that the ordinary methods of inculcating honourable conduct are not merely failures, but—still worse—they actually drive all generous and imaginative persons into a dare-devil defiance of them. We are ashamed to be good boys at school, ashamed to be gentle and sympathetic instead of violent and revengeful, ashamed to confess that we are very timid animals instead of reckless idiots, in short, ashamed of everything that ought to be the basis of our self-respect. All this is the fault of the teaching which tells men to be good without giving them any better reason for it than the opinion of men who are neither attractive to them, nor respectful to them, and who, being much older, are to a great extent not only incomprehensible to them, but ridiculous. Elder Daniels will never convert Blanco Posnet: on the contrary, he perverts him, because Blanco does not want to be like his brother; and I think the root reason why we do not do as our fathers advise us to do is that we none of us want to be like our fathers, the intention of the Universe being that we should be like God.

The rest of the letter dealt with Shaw's idea of a God who is trying but has not yet succeeded in getting things right in the world, and it concluded with the words: 'Suppose the world were only one of God's jokes, would you work any the less to make it a good joke instead of a bad one?'

In reply, Tolstoy wrote:

MY DEAR MR. BERNARD SHAW,—I have received your play and your witty letter. I have read your play with pleasure. I am in full sympathy with its subject.

Your remark that the preaching of righteousness has generally little influence on people, and that young men regard

as laudable that which is contrary to righteousness, is quite correct. It does not, however, follow that such preaching is unnecessary. The reason of the failure is that those who preach do not fulfil what they preach—*i.e.* hypocrisy.

I also cannot agree with what you call your theology. You enter into controversy with that in which no thinking person of our time believes or can believe: with a God-Creator. And yet you seem yourself to recognise a God who has got definite aims comprehensible to you.

'To my mind,' you write, 'unless we conceive God as engaged in a continual struggle to surpass himself—as striving at every birth to make a better man than before—we are conceiving nothing better than an omnipotent snob.'

Concerning the rest of what you say about God and about evil, I will repeat the words I said, as you write, about your *Man and Superman*, namely that the problem about God and evil is too important to be spoken of in jest. And therefore I will tell you frankly that I received a very painful impression from the concluding words of your letter: 'Suppose the world were only one of God's jokes, would you work any the less to make it a good joke instead of a bad one?'—Yours sincerely,

LEO TOLSTOY.

Some weeks after my last visit to Tolstoy, and not many months before his death, speaking of the dearth of good writers everywhere, he said: 'There are none now,' and then added with hesitation, 'unless, perhaps, Shaw.'

From Shaw our conversation passed on to the subject of Dramatic Censorship, about which Tolstoy said: 'Of course there should be no Censor, and no prosecution. It is strange even to speak of it! The good sense of the public would regulate matters.'

With reference to the then recently issued Minority Report of the Poor Law Commission, trying to combat his rooted distrust of paid officials, I pressed the point that *something* must be done for starving people, and that it is better to try to deal with the problem systematically than to let matters drift along in an accidental way; but he replied: 'All such activity, if people attribute importance

to it, is worthless. The one real and great thing is to work at one's own improvement. As an atom in the skin of my finger will do the best possible for my whole body if it does its own duty in its own place, so it is with each of us: we must do our duty, which is, not to judge others or injure them, but to render what service we can to those we meet.'—'Still,' I persisted, 'the destitute have to be provided for somehow, and you yourself, in a land where there is no Poor Law, give money to the beggars you meet.'—'Yes,' replied he, 'but I do not imagine that I am doing good! I only do it for myself, because I know that I have no right to be well off, while they are in misery!'

I did not pursue the subject, for it seemed to excite him; and when Dr. Berkenheim, who was then resident in the house, sided with me and urged the need of organisation, it seemed even to irritate Tolstoy.

To me it appears that it is urgently necessary for men of sense, good-will and organising ability to plan out ways in which the resources of civilisation may be utilised to mitigate the misfortunes of the submerged third of society; and it pained me to hear such difficult and important work treated as of no account—for I do not believe that a man fitted for it, would be 'doing his duty' by deliberately standing aside from all such efforts, and I always regret to listen to disparagement of attempts made to secure better and more humane social arrangements. But what one has to recognise is that, at its best, the human brain is a very limited and imperfect organ, and that a man very intently set on achieving one difficult task, is very apt to underrate the value of efforts made in another direction. I suppose that this applies both to those who are bent on perfecting themselves, and those bent on perfecting the organisation of society.

On another occasion Tolstoy spoke of 'the painful nature of our relation to servants,' and of how, in future ages, it will seem incredible that we can have been so morally degraded as to allow an old man, the father of a family

sometimes, to serve our children seated at the dinner-table.

He repeated his often expressed opinion that Dickens stands far above all other English writers. Gógol resembled him in humour, but had not his broad humane sympathies. In a different style Ruskin and Emerson were also very good. Among Russian writers Poúshkin stands first, and like Dickens, has no second. 'It is very remarkable that Poúshkin should have given us so many profound thoughts, simply and clearly expressed, for he was brought up in a bad aristocratic military circle, and died young.'

Of present-day Russian writers, 'Artsybáshef is talented. His *Sánin*, advocating no restraints, is bad; but his story, *Blood*, with a vegetarian subject-matter, ought to be better known and deserves to be translated.'

Tolstoy also remarked that Vegetarianism was making decided headway among the people he knew.

I asked him how it was that he, who dislikes public assemblies, should have expressed an intention of attending the Peace Conference that was to have been held at Stockholm that autumn. (It was cancelled, partly owing to the strikes.) He replied that he had thought it a good opportunity to draw attention to the subject.

After making (as he often does) a passing reference to God's guidance, Tolstoy remarked in parenthesis: 'I speak of a *personal* God, whom I do not acknowledge, for the sake of convenience of expression.' This recalled to my mind what he had said to me twelve years before, when he remarked that: 'There are two Gods,' and went on to explain:

There is the God people generally believe in—a God who has to *serve them* (sometimes in very refined ways, perhaps by merely giving them peace of mind). This God does not exist. But the God whom people forget—the God whom *we all have to serve*—does exist and is the prime cause of our existence and of all that we perceive.

He remarked that it is wonderful how ignorant even educated men are of religions other than their own. They

know such religions exist, and have some vague information about them, but no real understanding. He was interesting himself in a series of booklets the Mediator was preparing on the Eastern Religions, and was writing prefaces for one or two of them.

Afterwards he spoke of the advantage of 'the Anglo-Saxon characteristic of mastering one subject' and concentrating on it.

He said he got his friend Maklakóf to promise to speak in the Doúma on the Land Question from the Henry-George point of view. Next time they met, Tolstoy asked: 'Well, have you spoken yet?'—'No,' said Maklakóf, 'I have not had time to read up the subject sufficiently.'—'That,' said Tolstoy, 'is the worst of educated men: they cannot speak about any great question till they have read everything that has been written about it, for fear some one should say: "But have you read Schwarzenburg?"—and then, if they have not read Schwarzenburg, they are done; whereas a good, ignorant merchant like T. (a member of the Doúma, who cares for nothing but the Temperance Question) who has read nothing, but is keen on his own subject, will stick to his guns and do something with it.'

The land is the one great practical question of politics for which Tolstoy cares. He spoke emphatically of the shame of people not being able to get land they need to till, while other people own land they have never even seen.

He said he wanted to write again to the Tsar. 'It will do no good, but I feel as though I ought to. If the Tsar would go right on the Land Question, there would be no need to guard him. There used to be a Tsar whom the people seemed at least to respect; but now there is one who needs three rows of soldiers to prevent the people from killing him!'

The Countess, who had been his constant companion for forty-seven years, and has watched all the changes of his wonderful life, was during that visit of mine continuing the work she had done me the great favour of undertaking,

namely, the reading and correcting of as much of this book as was then ready. She, naturally, confined herself to dealing with the actual facts recorded, safeguarding me from errors in that respect, without in any way interfering with the free expression of my own opinion about her husband's views and writings. She is still quite active, preparing a new edition of her husband's works, collecting interesting mementos of her husband in a room devoted to the purpose in the Historical Museum in Moscow, and writing her own life as his companion—a record which cannot fail to be extremely interesting, but which she does not intend to publish at present.

What impressed me most, was the eager interest that this man of eighty-two, who was wheeled about the room in a bath-chair, took in life; and his keen enjoyment of everything that made for the triumph of the causes he had at heart. To the utmost limit of his strength, he still works as perseveringly as ambitious men in their prime work to make a fortune or win a position, and as ardently as young men strive to win the affection of a lady-love.

While I have been writing the last chapters of this book, something has occurred which shows that a struggle to attain nearer and nearer to the standard of life and conduct he has set himself, still unceasingly goes on in Tolstoy.

One day an officer called at Yásnaya, to upbraid him with his inconsistency in riding a horse and yet preaching poverty. Tolstoy pleaded that his horse, <sup>1910</sup> *Délire*, was a very old one. 'But,' said the officer, 'it is also a very fine one!'

Eventually, after a long talk, the officer departed, convinced that he had quite misjudged Tolstoy, and expressing regret that he would now have to destroy a denunciation he had prepared before making Tolstoy's acquaintance.

Tolstoy however, on his part, felt the pricks of conscience, and gave directions that *Délire* should be unshod.

For a week or two he abstained from riding altogether. Then, feeling the need of his accustomed exercise, he took

to riding a common peasant-horse; but, after a couple of months, some friends he visits had the pleasure of seeing him arrive once more on *Délire*.

Whether *Délire* will follow alcohol, meat, tobacco, and so many other things, into the domain of the desires Tolstoy has conquered, remains yet to be seen. Tolstoy first made up his mind to abandon riding, nearly twenty years ago; and one knows how tenacious he has been in similar efforts. Personally, I shall much regret to hear that he has finally abandoned an exercise that suits him so well; but one recognises that his intense struggle for self-mastery lies very near to the secret of his amazing achievements and tremendous productivity, as well as to the fact that, at eighty-two, he is still so keenly alive.

I have more than once spoken of Tolstoy's views as Medieval, but in doing so I mean no disparagement. In the rough times of the Middle Ages, though they had their Guilds and Corporations, there were many people who (like the hermits) set out to save their souls, alone with God, and who took no account of any earthly authority. There was also the conception of the knight-errant, who went about redressing human wrongs by the strength of his own right arm. But the modern world advances by learning to co-operate. For good or evil, it is the Trades Union, the Trust, the Combine, the Parliamentary Group, the Federation of States, and in general the linking up of man to man, and the limitation of each man's freedom in order to give all men more freedom, that characterises our time. Tolstoy is an example, and a very splendid example, of the knight-errant type that trusts alone to God and to its own right arm. If we are not able, and perhaps do not even wish, to revert to that type (but seek the advantages that come from a close interdependence on our fellow-men) let us at least recognise its heroism and its beauty, and remember that, but for the isolated efforts of the heroes and saints of the past, the world would not be what it is to-day.

We still to-day need the voice of one crying in the

wilderness: 'Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight!'

But it is Tolstoy's life that attracts, more than the doctrines that are peculiarly his own. Especially his old age has shown that the pursuit of the great things he has cared for yields more permanent stimulation, interest and enjoyment than the pursuit either of pleasure or of gain—for few indeed are the men of his age who are as ardently alive as he, or who feel so little regret for what the years have filched from them.

It was his passionate ardour that gave driving force to his message, causing his words to change the lives of many men, and making his influence—as it truly is—quite incalculable. No other writer's works were ever so promptly translated into so many languages, or reached so widespread an audience of serious readers while their writer was still alive; and there are few great men whose lives it would be possible to lay bare before the public, with such full assurance that by perfect frankness one will not diminish the respect and affection in which they are held by mankind.

Without Tolstoy's self-reliance, and readiness to challenge things that have grown up through ages and are deep-rooted in men's affections, he never could have accomplished what he has done in revaluing all values, putting down the mighty from their seats and exalting the humble and meek. That his qualities run to excess, and cause him to condemn occupations, pursuits and men he knows little about, may be true; as also that there is in him a spirit of contradiction, a suspiciousness of men's motives, and a vigour of invective, that contrast strangely with the humility and meekness he so sedulously cultivates, and the warm-hearted affection that was his from the first. But these things are spots on the sun. His genius, sincerity, industry, courage, endurance and tenacity; his marvellous intuition, extraordinary capacity for observation and artistic reproduction; his devotion to the service of truth and goodness; his self-abnegation; his concentration upon the most vital branches of human



thought, and his unparalleled capacity for making his meaning plain and his feeling attractive, mark him out as by far the greatest and most interesting man alive.

Of modern men who have stimulated the thoughts and consciences of their fellows—and whose words influence us to feel that we must not trust to a self-acting evolution, but must be up and doing to bring in the millennium ourselves—Tolstoy is so much the first, that one forgets to ask who is second.

While piecing together the scattered and sometimes seemingly contradictory facts of his life, I have realised more vividly than ever before how great my own debt to him is, and how inadequately this record conveys his spiritual value. That side of my subject takes me out of my depth, and the message necessarily suffers from the deficiencies of the messenger. Part, but only a small part, of what I felt as I drew near the end of my work, I expressed in the following letter to him :

DEAR LEO NIKOLÁYEVITCH,—Lately I have had occasion to read over, for the book I am writing, all the letters I have had from you. They vividly recall how much I owe to you, and how forbearing and kind you have been; and they make me keenly regret not to have done more in return for the encouragement and friendship you have so generously shown me.

I have not tried to make my book a panegyric of you or of your teaching, but while at work on it my sympathy with you, and my wonder at the immense amount you have accomplished, have continually grown.

You are definitely anti-political, whereas it is bred in my bones to feel that the work done by Pym and Hampden, and Washington and Abraham Lincoln, and in general the attempt the Western world has made at Constitutional Government—faulty and imperfect as it is, and slow as has been its progress—was not an ignoble effort, and has not utterly failed; and that that path may yet lead on to a juster and kindlier society than the world has yet seen.

I know how deep-rooted that difference of feeling and of outlook is, but yet it is superficial in comparison with the profounder ground common to us both, and which you helped me to reach. To both of us the present state of human society is needlessly and intolerably stupid and cruel. We both believe that intellectual integrity applied with kindly good-will, can reach such an understanding of the position as will render reformation possible; and we both in our different ways: you in a great and world-wide way, I in a very small, circumscribed way, have tried to see the truth, and make it 'plain to every cabman'—as you once said of the philosophy you wanted to write.

It seems strange that differing so greatly in race, nationality, class, training, occupation, pursuits and surroundings, you and I should have been able to come into touch with one another, and that you should have taken the trouble to help me and to treat me as a friend; and I am glad to feel that—whatever our differences of outlook may be—there is such fundamental unity as prevents any shade of bitterness between us, even when I grieve you by failing to accept conclusions you highly prize, or when (to my own disappointment) I failed to be able to co-operate with your friend, and found myself banished from his courts.

One of the great services you have rendered, not to me alone but to the English-speaking world, is that you have modified our conception of goodness. To large sections of the Puritan-ancestored English, to say that a man or woman is 'good,' suggests that they are probably rather disagreeable and unsympathetic; or if that is saying too much, it at any rate suggests to many of us an accentuation of the negative virtues, and that the person spoken of has, from his youth upwards, kept mainly the Mosaic commandments. In Russian, not only *dóbryy* but also *horóshiy* implies that the man referred to is of a kindly, large-hearted, sympathetic nature—for that is pre-eminently 'goodness' in the Russian perception. That flavour, that sense, that connotation of the idea of goodness, Russian writers in general—and you in particular—have done much to make current in our Western world.

To be swept into your strenuous movement was not all gain. You dragged us from our roots, and many of us were spun down the mighty current, unable to steer or row the rickety rafts we found ourselves upon. Some died, and some are now in lunatic asylums; but I feel that it was worth all the risk and pain; for nothing is so deadly as torpor, and nothing so dangerous as decay, and from those evils you saved us.

I owe you so much, that I never differ from any of your opinions without regret, or without remembering that perhaps, after all, I am mistaken; but I feel that it would violate the very essence of what I learnt from you, if I subordinated the truth as I see it, to any authority—even to your own.

I have in this letter not said half I feel, and want to say, but I hope you know that you have my affectionate gratitude always. Perhaps my thanks may be the more acceptable because I was a stranger and an alien and a trader within your gates, when you gave me the hand of friendship.

May all that is good be yours in life and death, and may the good seed you have scattered grow up to feed the hungry in many lands.

Tolstoy's life shows what splendid services a man, not exempt from human weaknesses, may render to his race. Though some of his opinions may not be acceptable or even quite intelligible to those who grow from roots different to his own, he has yet inscribed his name indelibly upon the hearts of men, and earned their lasting gratitude.

To realise the continuity of his struggles, and the measure of his success, we need only let our minds run back to the days when his brother Nicholas first told him of the secret written on a green stick, buried by the road at the edge of a certain ravine, showing how all men may cease to suffer, quarrel, or be angry, and may become permanently happy in a loving brotherhood.

In such a message, which can destroy all evil in men, and give them universal welfare, Tolstoy still believes.

The three-quarters of a century that have passed since then have not impaired his trust that a message exists which can destroy all evil in men, and give them universal welfare; and now that his journey draws near its end, he asks—‘since my body must be buried somewhere’—to be buried at the spot made sacred by that first boyish glimpse of a passion for goodness, which when it had matured surmounted all obstacles, and knit his soul to that of all his brother-men, from Yásnaya to the uttermost ends of the earth.

He has truly said that: ‘The most important thing in life is for man to unite with man; and the worst thing in life is to go apart from one another,’ and, beyond all else, one is profoundly indebted to a writer who by his stories has enabled men—who, but for him, might never have learned to feel alike—to enter into union with one another, and ‘to feel the mysterious gladness of a communion which, reaching beyond the grave, unites us with all men of the past who have been moved by the same feelings, and with all men of the future who will yet be touched by them.’

The first edition of this book had only been published a few weeks when Tolstoy left Yásnaya for the last time. Ten days later he died.

To complete my work it is necessary to tell the story of those last days; but this is not an easy task, for the closing scenes brought to light a struggle that had long been going on between his wife and the friend who had most influence over him: a struggle which grew out of Tolstoy’s views concerning property and legality; a struggle into which he was himself reluctantly dragged, and one which, almost before the earth had settled on his grave, resulted in a public conflict between his wife and his daughter.

There were moments when Tolstoy felt and expressed repulsion at these quarrels into which Tchertkóf had led

him ; but generally he sided firmly with the latter, whom he identified with the policy of Non-Resistance, to the validity of which theory he clung through all disappointments and despite the failure of the attempts made by himself and his followers to adopt it as a rule of life. In his eyes, his wife was representative of the old order against which he protested. She wished to obtain a revenue for the family from the publication of his books ; and stood for the retention of property, safeguarded by Government and police.

Tolstoy's dislike of all this threw him the more into the arms of Tchertkóf, whose influence seems to have grown stronger as Tolstoy's will grew weaker during the last years ; but it had been of no sudden growth. As long ago as 1902, Mary Lvóvna, speaking of him to me, remarked : ' It is my father's weakness that he relies so on Tchertkóf.'

Had the latter, like Tolstoy, earnestly sought to attain harmony in his personal relations with other people, the evil of the *inherent indefiniteness* which rendered their kind of Non-Resistance noxious might have been but dimly discerned, and people might long have continued to hope that progress lay in that direction. But Tchertkóf, adding the ardour of an Inquisitor to the zeal of a devotee, gave the world so startling an exhibition of the discord and confusion which naturally accompany that creed, that there is now no longer any excuse—hardly even any possibility—for people to deceive themselves about the matter. It is a case of good resulting from evil ; for the moral of the story is now writ so large that he who runs may read. The life of Tolstoy, who so earnestly desired good-will to prevail, ended amid angry disputes ; and the cinematographs exhibited in Moscow after his death showed how the door of the house in which he lay dying was slammed in his wife's face. That is a matter not to be slurred over ; and the great man's effort to find the path to peace would be largely wasted if we declined to profit by experience purchased at so high a

price. There is sometimes more instruction to be got from honest failure than from brilliant success.

During the summer of 1910 the Countess S. A. Tolstoy suffered from a nervous breakdown, and the doctors even talked of paranoia. The long-drawn struggle told terribly upon her. She showed the greatest jealousy of Tchertkóf's influence, and the strife which follows him through life like a shadow manifested itself at Yásnaya as soon as he resided in the neighbourhood.

When, after a temporary banishment from the Province, he obtained Government permission again to live near Tolstoy, this friction was renewed; and Tolstoy, though by nature one of the frankest of men, was persuaded to make the following will, which he took pains to conceal from his wife:

In the year 1910, the 22nd day of July, I, the undersigned, being of sound mind and firm memory, make the following disposition in case of my death of all my literary works, whether already written or yet to be written, to the day of my death, whether published or unpublished, artistic or of any other kind, finished or unfinished, dramatic, or in any other form: translations, adaptations, diaries, private letters, rough drafts, separate thoughts, and notes—in a word, of everything without exception that I may have written to the day of my death—wherever they may be, and in whosoever's possession they may be, whether in manuscript or printed, together with the copyright of all my works without exception, and the manuscripts themselves and all the papers I may leave: I bequeath them to be the absolute property of my daughter Alexandra Lvóna Tolstoy.

In case my daughter Alexandra Lvóna Tolstoy should die before me, I bequeath all the above to be the absolute property of my daughter Tatiána Lvóna Soohoteén.

LEO NIKOLÁYEVITCH TOLSTOY.

This represented a complete triumph for Tchertkóf; for the young Countess Alexandra was completely under his

influence, and was sure to deal with the property as he wished. Of all the family, she was the one least in harmony with her mother. The painful circumstances of her birth (recounted in a previous chapter) had made it impossible for the Countess to nurse her, and to that the latter attributed the fact that this daughter seemed less hers than any of her other children.

Abstract principles have a queer way of turning themselves inside-out in practice; and those that Tolstoy laid down for the abolition of strife continually created friction. It was, indeed, strange that a man so frank, sincere, and earnest as he in the repudiation of property rights, could have been persuaded to try to draw up a legally valid will, leaving 'the copyright of all my works' to his daughter. His attempt to conceal that will from his wife was unsuccessful. Rumours of its existence reached her, and she exacted from him a promise neither to let Tchertkóf come to their house, nor to go to visit him, nor even to write to him. The stipulation about correspondence was not observed, for Tchertkóf continued to receive letters from Tolstoy till the time the latter left home.

Minds that deliberately detach themselves from ordinary business and politics, repudiating the usual standards by which conduct is judged, and setting up—and from time to time modifying—standards of their own, easily become unintelligible to other people; and I will not attempt any complete explanation of the motives that prompted the man who influenced, and urged on, the sorely burdened old prophet. Fanaticism is not confined to old creeds.

Light is shed on certain general motives which, apart from special and immediate causes, led Tolstoy to abandon his home, by a letter he had written thirteen years earlier (8th June 1897), and which, after his decease, was found with the inscription: 'Unless I leave directions to the contrary this letter is to be handed to Sophia Andréyevna after my death.' It ran as follows:

DEAR SÓNYA.—I have long been tormented by the discord

between my life and my beliefs. I could not compel you all to change your life and habits, to which I myself had accustomed you; and I also could not, till now, leave you, for fear of depriving the children while still small of what little influence I may have over them, and of grieving you. On the other hand, I also cannot continue to live as I have lived these sixteen years, struggling, and irritating you, or myself falling under influences and temptations to which I have become accustomed, and by which I am surrounded; and I have now decided to do what I have long wished: to go away; first because for me, in my advancing years, this life becomes more and more burdensome, and I long more and more for solitude; and secondly because the children are now grown up, my influence is no longer needed, and you all have livelier interests which will render my absence little noticeable.

The chief thing is, that just as Hindoos nearing sixty retire into the woods, and as old religious men seek to devote their last years to God and not to jokes, puns, gossip, or tennis, so for me, entering my seventieth year, the all-soul-absorbing desire is for tranquillity, for solitude, and if not for entire harmony, at least to avoid crying discord between my life and my beliefs and conscience.

If I did this openly, there would be entreaties, pleadings, criticism, quarrels, and I might perhaps weaken and not carry out my decision—yet it must be carried out. And so, please forgive me if my act causes you pain; and above all, in your soul, Sónya, leave me free to go, and do not repine or condemn me.

That I have gone away from you does not mean that I am displeased with you. I know you could not—literally could not—and cannot see and feel as I do, and therefore could not and cannot change your life and sacrifice yourself for something you do not recognise. And therefore I do not blame you, but, on the contrary, recall with love and gratitude the long thirty-five years of our life together—especially the first half of that period, when you, with the maternal devotion of your nature, so firmly and energetically fulfilled what you considered to be your duty. You have given me and the world what you could give. You have given great motherly love and devotion, and you cannot but be prized for that. But during the last period



of our life—the last fifteen years—we have drifted asunder. I cannot think I am to blame, for I know I changed not for myself, nor for other people's sake—but because I could do no other. Neither can I blame you for not following me, but I thank you, and lovingly remember and shall continue to remember you for what you gave me.—Good-bye, dear Sónya.

Your loving LEO TOLSTOY.

But though he almost made up his mind to leave home, he did not then carry out his intention. His elder daughters—who sympathised with his views, but had a spirit of kindness which mitigated the sterner dogmas of the faith—were then, I think, an influence binding him to home.

Now, thirteen years later—Tatiána being married and Mary dead—these ties had grown weaker; and he carried out the intention that had been latent in his mind for thirty years.

It has been said that he was prompted by unpleasantness with his wife over his refusal of a large sum offered for the copyright of his works; but this can only have been one among many complex motives that influenced him.

On 28th October 1910 he took the decisive step; and he said the actual incident prompting him to do so was that, after going to bed the previous evening, he heard his wife searching among the papers in his study. The Countess denies that she was searching for anything; and explains that after her husband had made his Will, he often fancied that she was looking for that document. Tolstoy had long trained himself to be extraordinarily patient with his wife in their personal intercourse, when she was irritable or sarcastic; but, for all that, the clash of wills between them had produced a tension which had now reached breaking point; and her presence in his study, which in other circumstances would hardly have disturbed him—for it had even been agreed that she was to have access to his private Diary—was sufficient to bring about the catastrophe.

When she had retired, he rose, collected some manuscripts,

took two changes of underclothing, and told his friend and follower, Dr. Makovétsky (who for years had been resident at Yásnaya) that he had decided to leave home at once.

He bade good-bye to his daughter Alexandra, promising to let her join him later on. Then, about five in the morning, he left the house and set out for the stables, situated some little distance away. The night was dark, and as he hurried along he stumbled against some bushes in the garden, lost his cap, became entangled, and had to go back to the house for a lantern. Having procured one, he made his way to the stables, roused the coachmen, and told them to harness, closing the door that the light might not be seen from the house. His daughter and Makovétsky brought his portmanteau and other things into the stable-yard; and without returning to the house he again took leave of her and set out with Makovétsky, not for the nearest station, but for Stchóokino.

While they waited there for the train, the coachman asked him: 'Has your Excellency no message to send home?'—'No, nothing . . . go back home!' replied Tolstoy, with a resolute shake of the head.

He decided first of all to visit his sister Mary, at the Shámordin Convent.

About noon, the travellers had to change into a train with only one passenger carriage—a crowded, smoky, and overheated third-class. Though it rained and the wind was sharp, Tolstoy long stood on the open platform at the end of the carriage; and there, probably, caught cold.

It was almost night before the wretchedly slow train reached Kazélsk: a station three miles from Óptin Monastery and twelve from Shámordin Convent. As it was late, Tolstoy decided not to proceed to his destination, but to spend that night at the Monastery Hotel if they would admit him. When they had driven up to the gate, he said to the monk who came out to them: 'I am Tolstoy. . . . Will you admit me for the night?'—'We admit every one,' was the monk's reply.

Next morning Tolstoy visited his sister. Widely as their beliefs differed, he and she had always retained sympathy for one another, and had never broken the links formed by tender memories of childhood. She quickly understood what had occurred, and the two wept together for a long time. Tolstoy, seeing how peaceful were her surroundings, remarked that he too would be ready to live in a monastery, if only it were not necessary to submit to the Church ritual.

He took a room at the Convent Hotel, and there his daughter Alexandra joined him. During the day he went for a walk, and inquired whether there was no peasant's hut he could rent to live in.

He spent the next day, Saturday, with his sister, and parted from her in the evening with no immediate intention of leaving the place. But his daughter persuaded him to continue his journey, lest her mother should find him.

His room at the hotel was overheated, and his daughter found him sitting writing in a draught, with an open window behind him. That night he felt ill, but next morning he rose at five o'clock and decided to proceed at once to Rostóf-on-Don, where he wished to procure a foreign passport in order to leave Russia.

About midday he was taken quite ill while travelling by train; and Dr. Makovétsky decided that it was necessary to break the journey at the first available station; which happened to be Astápovo.

Supported by his daughter and Makovétsky, he descended from the train with difficulty. His temperature had risen nearly to 104. He coughed, had a cold in his head, and a very irregular pulse. The stationmaster, hearing who he was, willingly placed his house at Tolstoy's disposal. Tolstoy himself took the disappointment good-naturedly, and remarked half-jokingly: 'Well, it's checkmate . . . don't be vexed!'

The next morning, Monday, Tolstoy had Tchertkóf telegraphed for. The telegram was signed 'Nikoláyef': an alias

agreed upon between them. He also that day dictated some thoughts, entered up his Diary, was read to, and even managed to write an account of his flight from Yásnaya Polyána.

In the Diary, among other entries, he wrote the following :

God is the illimitable All; man is but a limited manifestation of Him.

Or, even better—God is that illimitable All, of which man is conscious of being a limited part. . . .

God is not love; but the more love there is in man, the more is God made manifest in him, and the more truly does he exist.

Tolstoy supposed at this time that no one but Tchertkóf knew of his whereabouts; but a newspaper correspondent had tracked him to the convent, and detectives had followed him thence.

As in early life he had often forgotten to take with him the official documents he needed, so now he had left home without a passport, and his family had telegraphed to the Governor of Kalouga not to let him be arrested for being without one.

From Astápovo his daughter telegraphed to her eldest brother in Moscow to send Dr. Nikítin. She added that her father wished to see his eldest children, but feared the arrival of the others.

His wife, as soon as she heard that he had stopped at Astápovo, travelled by special train, with her children, to join him. The eldest son, Sergius, was there before her; but so also was Tchertkóf, who had arrived at nine o'clock that Tuesday morning. He; Alexandra Lvóna; her friend, Varvára M. Feokrítof; Makovétsky; and a young man in Tchertkóf's employ, Alexéy Sergényenko, were in possession of the house and of the patient. It therefore happens that most of the information obtainable about Tolstoy's last illness comes from those who were more or

less biassed against the Countess, and more or less dominated by Tchertkóf.

It is true that Tolstoy himself dreaded having to see his wife; for though he had made up his mind to let his daughter Alexandra inherit the copyright of all his works, he yet felt that if he met his wife face to face it would be almost impossible to insist on thus supplanting her in an occupation she had been accustomed to for nearly fifty years, and to which she had devoted a great deal of attention.

The responsibility for excluding her from the house did not, however, rest with him, for he was carefully kept in ignorance of her presence at Astápovo.

Dr. D. V. Nikítin on his arrival examined the patient, and diagnosed inflammation of the left lung; but this by itself was not very serious; and what Tolstoy really died of seems to have been nervous exhaustion. The long struggle to find a way to apply his principles in his own life, and the resulting conflict with those around him, had worn him out and left him unable to withstand an attack of illness, slight in itself, produced by exposure after he left home.

During the night following Tuesday, 2nd November, he slept badly, groaning and suffering from heartburn.

The following day, when the doctors wished him to take some food, he replied: 'I do not want to, and I think that when one does not want to, it is better not to.'

At this stage of his illness, while still capable of expressing most serious reflections, he began intermittently to show signs of childishness such as are often observable in people seriously ill. For instance, having seen some one wiping the floor near him, he began to be fidgety to have it wiped whenever he noticed the slightest thing on it. From noticing the doctors take his temperature, he got a taste for the process and frequently tried to take it himself, though for all his efforts he nearly always failed to read the thermometer.

He was particularly animated that day: seemed pleased that his fever had abated; and, though on good terms

personally with his doctors, emphatically expressed his customary disapproval of their profession. To Tchertkóf he remarked with warmth, that doctors in general busy themselves about nonsense: bacteria and such like; whereas 'they ought to attend to the hygienic conditions of life.'

He began dictating a letter for me in English (though he usually wrote to me in Russian), but he got no further than the words: 'On my way to the place where I wished to be alone, I was . . .' Interrupted at that point, the letter was never completed; and it was the last but one he ever attempted to dictate.

Having heard that I. I. Gorbounóf, the manager of the Mediator, and A. V. Goldenweiser (whose pianoforte playing he much appreciated, and with whom he used frequently to play chess) had arrived at Astápovo, he had each of them in separately, and showed them his usual friendliness.

At about 5 p.m. he called in Tchertkóf and Nikítin, and to them he spoke of his uneasiness lest his wife should hear of his illness and come to Astápovo. He had a telegram sent to his children (whom he supposed to be still at Yásnaya) to say that he was very weak, and that an interview with his wife would be disastrous for him. To Tchertkóf he added: 'You understand that if she comes here I shall not be able to refuse her . . .'; and he began to cry.

He was by this time so enfeebled that he had to be carefully supported when he had occasion to get out of bed; and on being put back, his legs had to be lifted from the floor. Once, after being helped in this way by three people, he remarked in a weak, sorrowful voice, as he lay on his back breathing rapidly after his exertion: 'The peasants . . . the peasants, how they die!' and again his eyes filled with tears. To the very end, his sense of the injustice of social arrangements, which enable some people to have a superfluity while others lack necessities, never deserted him. It was so strong, that, reversing the tendency common among selfish

people, his desire to be freed from material comforts often, during his last years, seemed to outweigh his desire for harmony and concord.

Later, he remarked: 'Evidently I shall have to die in my sins!'—to which Tchertkóf replied with conviction: 'This is not sin, but love that now surrounds you. You have done all you could to escape from sin!'

Tolstoy having asked to have a newspaper read to him, Tchertkóf complied, reading among other things a letter written by himself, in which he explained Tolstoy's action in leaving home. The article ended with the words:

We can only wish that he may find unhindered, in the modest surroundings amid which he seeks for solitude and concentration, and amid the simple folk who are so near his heart, that for which his soul thirsts, and which, by his untiring and fearless labour for the spiritual and material interests of toiling and enslaved humanity, he has deserved.

This letter commended itself to Tolstoy, who after listening to some other articles, asked what had become of the correspondence that arrived for him after he left Yásnaya. Tchertkóf replied that at first Alexandra Lvóna had received it, as Tolstoy had directed; but that when she left home she had handed the matter over to him, and that the letters had been sorted: begging letters, as usual, left unanswered, and orders for books attended to. Letters expressing abstract ideas, he had brought to Astápovo. These Tolstoy asked to have read to him.

The first was from a peasant, M. P. Nóvikof, with whom Tolstoy, when planning to leave Yásnaya, had thought of staying. The man wrote that Tolstoy's life was dear to him, as 'to all who are akin to you in spirit,' and that he wished it to last as long as possible. 'But,' he continued, 'that can only be among the accustomed conditions in which you have lived for eighty-two years.' He went on to say that for a visit of a day, a week, or a month, 'my cottage

is very convenient. It has a light room, which all my family would gladly give up to you, and they would also lovingly serve you.'

Tolstoy said that Nóvikof should be thanked, and told that he had now gone in quite another direction.

Only three more letters were read, as it was inadvisable to fatigue the patient.

That day, Wednesday, Tolstoy wrote in his Diary for the last time. His last words in it are:

'I see our plans have failed. . . . *Fais ce que dois, adv.* . . .<sup>1</sup> It is all for the good of others, and chiefly of myself.'

That night he slept badly, moaned, and was delirious. The action of his heart was weak and irregular, and the pulse reached 120-130 a minute.

On the Thursday he looked very ill. His lips were very dry and white. In general, as his illness progressed, his cheeks sank in, his lips grew thinner and more bloodless, and his face showed a more and more worn expression, indicating the pain he endured. It was, however, only occasionally that his sufferings became acute. At such moments he would rise convulsively to a sitting posture, letting his legs hang out of bed, while his body swayed from side to side. Then he would soon sink back again on to his pillows, with a look of resignation.

He evidently set himself to endure his sufferings patiently, as to the duty nearest at hand. At times he said: 'It is very hard, very oppressive'; and seemed to be trying to discern the will of his Master, and conscientiously to fulfil it.

On the morning of Thursday he said to Tchertkóf: 'It seems I am dying . . . but perhaps not! I must *strive* a little longer,' and his eyes grew moist.

He who had so long and so arduously endeavoured to do his duty, did not relax his efforts, but maintained the

<sup>1</sup> The commencement of a French motto: 'Do what's right, come what may.'



struggle to the end: not, however, without a certain perplexity at times as to what his duty was.

He still wished to be read to, and to dictate his thoughts; but frequently lapsed into delirium, and occasionally showed the unreasonable irritability of a sick man. He gave impatient instructions about arranging his sheets. His mind wandered, he evidently at one time did not realise what his watch was for, and he began to use words in a wrong sense. He often took hold of his blanket, and seemed to be trying to hook it on to his bare breast.

During the Thursday night he hardly slept at all, was excited, and constantly delirious. He tossed about in bed, and was incoherent. His breathing became laboured, and his pulse weak.

At 2.30 in the morning the Countess Alexandra awoke Tchertkóf with the words: 'Papa is very ill!' When he reached the patient, Tchertkóf found that the latter wished to dictate something, but was delirious, persistently demanding that they should read him a passage he imagined that he had just dictated. To pacify him, Tchertkóf read from *A Circle of Reading* for some time. Tolstoy listened attentively, and eventually quieted down.

During the last days the doctors administered injections of camphor, digitaline, codeine, and morphia. Tolstoy was too ill to object, but he had previously expressed to Makovétsky his disapproval of such treatment.

In addition to the doctors already mentioned, Tolstoy was attended by Dr. G. M. Berkenheim, who knew him very well and had resided at Yásnaya when for any reason Makovétsky was absent.

Expressions Tolstoy let drop from time to time indicated that he had no fear of death, which he knew might be at hand, and that he generally felt reconciled even to suffering and sickness.

'Ah, well! . . . This also is good.'—'All is simple and good.'—'It is good . . . yes, yes!' Such were some of his utterances.

His eldest son, Sergius, and his eldest daughter, Tatiána (Mme. Soohoteén), came every day to attend him. Some of his conversations with his daughter were very touching, not merely from the deep affection the two felt for one another, but also because of his real concern for his wife, whom he still supposed to be at Yásnaya, ill, and in ignorance of his whereabouts. Mme. Soohoteén found herself in a difficult position. She did not wish to deceive her father; but to have informed him that her mother was waiting outside, longing to be admitted—and to have thus precipitated a collision—would have been a great responsibility, and might have endangered his life. When her father's questions became too direct to be evaded, she therefore told him it was best not to speak about the matter just then, but that when he was stronger she would tell him everything. Tolstoy, not understanding the cause of this reserve, replied: 'But you must understand how *necessary* for my soul it is to know it!' and tears came into his eyes. Thereupon, Mme. Soohoteén bade him a hurried good-bye and left the room.

Tolstoy's thoughts dwelt much on his wife, especially on the Friday, and he expressed regret and anxiety that people might think badly of her. 'I think we have not acted considerably,' said he, and then grew drowsy and again became incoherent.

Just then a telegram arrived from the Metropolitan Antonius of Petersburg, urging Tolstoy to return to the bosom of the Church. He was so weak that it was decided not to show him the message: especially as, during his previous serious illness in the Crimea in 1902, the same bishop had sent him a similar message, in reply to which Tolstoy had said to his son:

'Sergéy, tell these gentlemen that they should leave me in peace. . . . How is it they do not understand that, even when one is face to face with death, 2 and 2 still make 4!'

That evening, Abbot Varsonothius arrived from Óptin

Monastery by order of the Holy Synod, and asked to be allowed to say a few words to Tolstoy, or even merely to bless the sick man. Tolstoy's wishes on the matter being well known, the Abbot was not admitted.

The action of Tolstoy's heart was by this time very weak, and it was decided to call in Dr. Shouróvsky and Professor Oúsof (two of the most eminent Moscow physicians) for a consultation.

The first half of Friday night Tolstoy slept fairly well; but later on he became very restless, moaning and being much troubled with hiccoughs and heartburn.

On Saturday, about 2 P.M., he sat up in bed, and exclaimed in a loud voice: 'This is the end. . . . I give you only this advice . . . besides Leo Tolstoy, there are many other people in the world, and you attend only to this Leo . . . !' A failure of the heart followed. His pulse almost ceased; blue spots appeared on ears, lips, nose, and nails, and his feet and hands grew cold. Artificial breathing was resorted to. Camphor and caffeine were injected. Towards evening he again seemed better, and took a little milk and gruel.

His general attitude towards his illness is well expressed in a letter he wrote to Tchertkóf on 17th October, some ten days before leaving home. Referring to the fainting fits to which he was subject during the last years of his life, he said:

Till yesterday I thought little of my attacks, or did not think of them at all; but yesterday I vividly imagined how I should some day die of one of them; and I understood that though physically such a death would be quite painless and good, yet spiritually it would deprive me of the precious moments of dying, which may be so beautiful. This led me to the thought, that if those last conscious moments are to be cut off from me, it is yet in my power to extend them to all the hours, days, maybe months and years (scarcely years) which may yet precede my death. I can treat all those days and months as seriously and solemnly (not externally, but in my inner consciousness)

as I should regard my last moments if I knew death to be at hand.

Now that death was actually approaching, he tried hard to adjust himself to the conditions, and to learn whatever lessons this fresh experience could yield; but the failure of his mental powers, and the acute physical sufferings he occasionally endured, caused him perplexity, which found expression in the exclamation: 'I do not understand what I have to do!'

A frequent movement of his hand across his blanket, as though he were writing, indicated that the desire to express himself was strong within him to the last.

His consciousness that death was drawing near showed itself in disjointed exclamations such as: 'It's time to knock off. . . all is over!'—'Here is the end, and it doesn't matter. . . .'

For the most part his mind was clear, his manner towards those about him kindly, and his interest in life's great problems unabated to the end.

Towards midnight on Saturday he was worse, and in his delirium he repeatedly exclaimed: 'To escape . . . to escape . . . !' A large injection of morphia was administered; his breathing fell from 60 to 36 a minute, and his pulse grew weaker and weaker. At 4 A.M., when it had become almost indistinguishable and an injection of a solution of salt had no longer any apparent effect, his wife—who had long been waiting anxiously close at hand—was at last admitted to his deathbed. Controlling her agitation, she entered quietly, and fell on her knees to kiss his hand. He sighed deeply, but gave no sign of being conscious of her presence.

Artificial respiration was then again resorted to. Tolstoy was calm and tranquil, but breathed loudly. One might have thought he was sleeping. About 5 A.M. he raised his knee, and made an effort to turn away from the light of a candle that was brought near. For some time he continued

to breathe quietly, but presently a whistling sound made itself heard. Then, about six o'clock, his breathing became scarcely audible. His family and friends assembled round the deathbed. 'The last breaths!' said Dr. Shouróvsky, who stood near the head of the bed; and at seven minutes past six on the morning of Sunday, 7th November (20th, new style), the great man died calmly and painlessly.

. . . . .

During the week of his illness at Astápoovo, that little country station had been thronged by representatives of the Government, including the Governor of the Province, a special official sent by Stolýpin, gendarme officers, important railway officials, swarms of press men, photographers, cinematographers, and many others.

Having broken away from the dearly loved place of his birth to live a life of poverty and humility among strangers, a tragic fate had decreed that Tolstoy was to give more trouble, and be the occasion of more labour to his fellow-men than he had been at any previous moment of his life. Besides his family and friends, no less than five doctors were in attendance on him; the stationmaster had been turned out of his house; many people were living in railway carriages side-tracked for their accommodation at that small wayside station; the local telegraphic arrangements had broken down almost completely under the enormous pressure of work put upon them; while the telegraph wires and cables of the world were kept busy with messages concerning the great man who lay dying amid such unusual circumstances, and many thousands of columns of printed matter about him were written, set in type, printed and circulated. Surely, never before did the deathbed of a recluse receive such publicity!

The cordiality of the sympathy manifested when the news of his illness and death became public proved however that, despite all mistakes, his endeavour to find a way of making human relations truly humane had endeared him to the mass

of his fellow countrymen, as well as to many thousands of other men in all parts of the world.

The Holy Synod, by forbidding the performance of memorial services in the churches, and a small fringe of reactionaries by fierce denunciations in the *Doúma* and the press, only made the general feeling of the country the more conspicuous by contrast.

The Tsar, the *Doúma*, and the Council of State were at one in expressing sorrow at the loss of Russia's great writer. All the leading newspapers appeared with black borders. The privately owned theatres were closed. The Rector of Petersburg University suspended lectures on the day that its Honorary Member, Leo Tolstoy, was buried; and educational establishments throughout the land did all they were allowed to do to honour his memory.

Nor were these signs of sorrow and respect confined to Russia. The Chamber of Deputies in Paris paid its homage to the great Slav writer; and from many distant lands came tributes of the high esteem in which he was held.

The student demonstrations in his honour (taking as they did the form of protests against capital punishment, and being succeeded by demonstrations against the flogging of political prisoners in Siberia) led, sad to say, to the suppression a few months later of the self-government the Russian Universities had enjoyed for several years past. The blame for this calamity rests on the reactionary Ministry, which believed in force as a remedy, as obstinately as, and less intelligently than, Tolstoy believed in the repudiation of all physical force.

It was characteristic of the misgovernment prevailing in Russia that, despite the words of the Tsar and the action of the *Doúma* and of the Council of State, the local authorities generally, taking their cue from the Holy Synod and from the Black Hundreds, opposed all attempts to show honour to Tolstoy's memory.

To understand, on the one hand, the affection and admiration so many people feel for Tolstoy; and, on the other

hand, the opposition and dislike he so often provoked, one has first to remember that his task was to strengthen and encourage the motives which cause men to live together in amity, and that there is no work man can do more stimulating and important than that; and one has next to remember that in his ardour Tolstoy formulated his law of Non-Resistance in a shape which obscured the truth at which he aimed, led him on to the repudiation of Government, law, and property, and then broke down utterly in practice, after occasioning fierce dissensions among his own followers. It was pathetic to see how tenaciously—in the teeth of all disappointments and of all experience—he clung to his dogma; and it would be difficult to explain the fact that so sincere a man (ready enough on other points to admit his own mistakes) could never be prevailed upon to reconsider his statement of that matter, had he not himself, in *What is Art?* supplied a key to the puzzle, in the passage where he says :

I know that most men—not only those considered clever, but even those who are very clever and capable of understanding most difficult scientific, mathematical, or philosophic problems—can very seldom discern even the simplest and most obvious truth if it be such as to oblige them to admit the falsity of conclusions they have formed, perhaps with much difficulty: conclusions of which they are proud, which they have taught to others, and on which they have built their lives.

That remark fits his case exactly. One has also to remember that Tolstoy was exceedingly eager not to be content with *talk*, but to get something *done*, and that men should prove, by external changes in their lives, that they value good-will more than material possessions. He therefore sought a categorical imperative wherewith to drive men forward. In the last analysis he was not, at heart, a Non-Resister at all; and his definition of the principle indicates that fact. He wished by moral suasion to *compel* men to abandon the things he thought caused evil, but he

did not realise that moral compulsion produces reactions as strong as those produced by physical force, and may easily become equally destructive of good-will ; especially when, as in this case, the coercer has not been sufficiently careful to make his demands exactly correspond to the real truth of the matter.

By discriminating between the noble end he had in view, and the ineffectual method by which he sought to attain it, one comes to understand both his strength and his weakness; and then neither the love he evoked, nor the opposition he excited any longer seems strange.

A golden rule for all who would get to the heart of his teaching and extract its purest gems, is to avoid overrating the importance of his Law of Non-Resistance. He had lessons to teach far finer and less questionable than that !

Had he been less great, all his achievements might easily have been lost sight of in the confusion that arose from the discussion of his Christian-anarchist views, and amid the rancour aroused by ill-considered attempts to practise those beliefs. But he was so great that even *that* question—important as it is—sinks naturally into a subordinate place in his life ; and one is able to admire his heroic moral efforts and stupendous literary achievements undisturbed.

When, at the age of fifty, he was apparently on the verge of sinking into a state of pessimistic apathy such as sometimes afflicts men who have finished their work and no longer see anything worth vigorously striving for, by a tremendous effort, sweating drops of blood, he attained to a view of life which (despite whatever errors it included) had the effect of filling his life with a mighty purpose, and keeping him young in spirit and ardent at his work to the very end. All who came in touch with him, even when he was over eighty, felt that he was far more alive than most men are when in the prime of life.

That is a reward which naturally falls to those who really believe that life has a noble purpose, and who are convinced that they can co-operate with the noble and great who are



gone, in the age-long task of straightening the crooked ways and smoothing the rough places humanity must tread.

At a time when creeds crumble and faiths fail, and when to multitudes of men life is full of confusion and has no clearly discernible plan or purpose, Tolstoy offered a coherent chart which shows all human activities running to one centre. He assured men that life may be both sane and sublime, and he set the example of a life unselfishly devoted to high and holy ends.

The day after his death, the train bearing his corpse home made its way very slowly from Astápovo, for at every station on the way multitudes had assembled to pay their last respects. It only arrived at Zásoka about eight o'clock on Tuesday morning, 9th November.

Though a reactionary Minister prohibited the special trains which were to have been run from Moscow to enable people to attend the funeral, the station was crowded by peasants, students, and deputations. Foremost among them were the villagers of Yásnaya Polyána, who had brought a banner bearing on a white linen band the words: 'Leo Nikoláyevitch, the memory of your goodness will never fade among us orphaned peasants.'

The scene at his funeral clearly indicated the esteem and affection in which he was held.

The coffin was carried from the station by Tolstoy's sons and by peasants, to the house that had so long been his. The procession was almost a mile long, and included two choirs of students who sang the chorale 'Eternal Memory.'

On reaching the house the body was placed in the room in which thirty years previously, perplexed by life's mysteries, the great writer had wished to hang himself. It had now been cleared of almost everything, except a bust of his much-loved brother Nicholas. Here many people paid their last respects to his remains, and then the coffin was taken outside and placed under the 'Beggar's

Tree,' beneath which it had so long been customary for poor petitioners to await and interview him. As soon as the coffin appeared, the whole crowd fell on their knees. Here again many people from the crowd bade him a last farewell. Then to the strains of 'Eternal Memory' the body was borne to a wooded knoll where, surrounded by nine oaks, a grave had been dug by the peasants of the village.

There were no speeches, but many sobs, at Tolstoy's interment. One man cried out: 'Our great Leo is dead! Long live our great Leo's spirit! May his precepts of Christianity be fulfilled!' and the whole crowd knelt while the body was interred.

The spot chosen for the grave was the one where, three-quarters of a century before, the brothers had played, and where Nicholas was supposed to have buried the green stick on which was written the secret it was the great purpose of Leo Tolstoy's whole life to discover and to reveal to us all.

He who seeks that message need not succeed fully in his quest in order to win men's hearts. He may even seem to fail, and yet his example may do more to make life worth living than the most brilliant material success could accomplish.

Tolstoy never read the whole of that magic message; for no one has yet read more than scraps of it—and those not quite clearly. But the fact that he sought it, supplies the key to all his writings from *Boyhood* to *I Cannot Be Silent*; and we may be sure that the author of *What Men Live By* had at least read a large part of the great secret.

The love and gratitude that followed him were abundantly earned; for if he was dogmatic—and the letter killeth—he was also inspired, and the spirit giveth life!

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Information received from the Countess S. A. Tolstoy and Count S. L. Tolstoy.

## CHRONOLOGY

As in the text, dates are given old style: till 1900 twelve days, and since 1900 thirteen days, behind our style.

- |      |           |  |
|------|-----------|--|
| 1878 |           | <b>Writing <i>Confession</i>.</b>                        |
| 1879 | June      | Visits Kief, and Fet.                                    |
|      | „ Autumn  | Ceases to fast.  |
|      | „ 20 Dec. | Son, Michael, born.                                      |
| 1880 | Spring    | <b>At work on <i>Criticism of Dogmatic Theology</i>.</b> |
| 1881 | March     | <b>Letter to Tsar.</b>                                   |
|      | „ June    | Visits Óptin Monastery.                                  |
|      | „ Summer  | <b>At work on <i>A Union of the Four Gospels</i>.</b>    |
|      | „         | <i>What Men Live By</i> published.                       |
|      | „ 31 Oct. | Son, Alexéy, born.                                       |
| 1882 |           | Acquaintance with Gay and Mihaylóvsky.                   |
|      | „         | Slumming in Moscow.                                      |
|      | „         | Addresses Moscow Doúma, on Destitution.                  |
|      | „         | Unsuccessful attempt to publish <i>Confession</i> .      |
|      | „ Autumn  | Buys house in Moscow.                                    |
|      | „ Winter  | Studies Hebrew.  |
|      | „ „       | Title dropped. Does manual labour.                       |
| 1883 | Jan.      | <b>Writing <i>What Do I Believe?</i></b>                 |
|      | „         | Objects to using money.                                  |
|      | „ Aug.    | Death of Tourgénéf.                                      |
|      | „ Sept.   | <b>Refuses Jury-Service.</b>                             |
|      | „ „       | Lecture on Tourgénéf prohibited.                         |
| 1884 | Jan.      | <i>What Do I Believe?</i> forbidden.                     |
|      | „ „       | Gay paints his portrait.                                 |
|      | „         | <i>The Decembrists</i> published.                        |
|      | „ 18 June | Daughter, Alexandra, born.                               |

- 1884 Oct. Visits Gay in Tchernígov.  
 „ Countess publishes his works.
- 1885 Visits Crimea.  
 „ 'The Mediator' Founded.  
 „ Acquaintance with Frey.  
 „ Autumn Becomes a Vegetarian.  
 „ Renounces Hunting and Tobacco.
- 1886 Writes *The First Distiller, The Imp and the Crust*, etc.  
 „ 18 Jan. Death of son, Alexéy.  
 „ 14 Feb. Finishes *What Then Must We Do?*  
 „ Spring Walks from Moscow to Yásnaya.  
 „ Summer Haymaking and barn-building.  
 „ *Iván The Fool* written.  
 „ *The Death of Iván Ilyítch* published.  
 „ Seriously ill with erysipelas, and writes  
*The Power of Darkness*.
- 1887 Jan. *The Power of Darkness* forbidden.  
 „ Summer Writes *On Life*.  
 „ 23 Sept. Silver Wedding.  
 „ Autumn Répin's first portrait of Tolstoy.  
 „ „ Writes *The Empty Drum*.  
 „ „ Founds Temperance Society.  
 „ „ Speaks to Psychological Society.  
 „ Winter *The Power of Darkness* privately performed.
- 1888 22 Feb. *The Power of Darkness* performed in Paris  
 (Théâtre Libre).  
 „ 31 March Son, Iván, born.  
 „ Winter Writes *Culture's Holiday*.
- 1889 Spring Walks from Moscow to Yásnaya.  
 „ June Writing *The Kreutzer Sonata* and *Fruits of Culture*.  
 „ Autumn Correspondence with Adin Ballou.  
 „ Dec. Finishes *The Kreutzer Sonata*.  
 „ 30 Dec. Performance of *Fruits of Culture* at Yás-  
 naya.
- 1890 *The Kreutzer Sonata* forbidden.

- 1890 Répin's picture: 'Tolstoy in his room.'
- „ Summer Visits Optin Monastery.
- „ The Countess obtains Tsar's permission to publish *The Kreutzer Sonata*.
- „ Tolstoy denounced by priests as Antichrist.
- 1891 24 Jan. First performance of *Fruits of Culture* in Moscow.
- „ Writes *Why Do Men Stupefy Themselves?*
- „ 19 Sept. Renounces Copyrights, and Divides Property Among His Family.
- „ Sept. Goes to Famine District.
- 1892 Spring Narrowly Escapes Incarceration.
- „ Articles on Famine.
- „ Engaged on Famine Relief work.
- „ Répin paints: 'Tolstoy ploughing and harrowing.'
- 1893 14 May Finishes *The Kingdom of God is Within You*.
- „ Autumn End of Famine.
- 1894 June Death of N. N. Gay.
- „ Writes *Christianity and Patriotism*.
- „ 26 Nov. *Reason and Religion* finished.
- „ 28 Dec. *Religion and Morality* finished.
- 1895 23 Feb. Death of son, Iván.
- „ Spring Writes *Master and Man*.
- „ 29 June Doukhobórs attacked by Cossacks.
- „ Writes Appeal on behalf of Doukhobórs.
- 1896 Writes *Patriotism and Peace*.
- „ First public performance in Russia of *The Power of Darkness*.
- „ Dec. *Help!* published.
- 1897 Pan-Russian Missionary Congress denounces Tolstoy.
- „ June Marriage of second daughter, Mary.
- „ Winter Writes *What is Art?*
- 1898 Finishes *What is Art?*
- 1899 Doukhobór Migration.
- „ Letter on Hague Conference.

- 1899 14 Nov. Marriage of eldest daughter, Tatiána.  
 „ Dec. **Finishes *Resurrection*.**
- 1900 5 April The Synod's Secret Circular.  
 „ Spring Writes *The Slavery of Our Times*.  
 „ Summer **Ill-Health.**
- 1901 22 Feb. **Excommunication.**  
 „ March Replies to the Synod's Edict.  
 „ 15 March *Letter to the Tsar and his Assistants*.  
 „ Summer Illness.  
 „ Aug. **Taken to Crimea.**  
 „ Autumn Writes: *Hadji-Murat, What is Religion?*  
 and *The Soldier's Notes*.  
 „ Winter Continued illness.
- 1902 16 Jan. **Letter to Tsar.**  
 „ Feb. **Finishes *What is Religion?***  
 „ June Returns to Yásnaya.  
 „ 1 Nov. **Finishes *An Appeal to The Clergy*.**
- 1903 April Protests against Jew-baitings. *Esarhaddon*.
- 1904 May Finishes *Bethink Yourselves!* a protest  
 against the Japanese war.  
 „ Dec. Condemns the Constitutional Movement.  
 1905 *The One Thing Needful*, and other articles,  
 seized by police.
- 1906 **Compiles *A Circle of Reading*.**  
 „ Aug. Serious illness of the Countess.  
 „ Seizure by police of many of Tolstoy's  
 works.  
 „ 26 Nov. Death of daughter, Mary, Princess  
 Obolénsky.
- 1907 30 Jan. Seizure by police of many editions of  
 Tolstoy's books.  
 „ Holds classes for village children.  
 „ Nizhni-Nóvgorod newspaper fined Rs. 500  
 for printing *Thou Shalt Kill No*  
*One*.
- 1908 **Finishes *I Cannot Be Silent*, a protest  
 against the Courts-Martial.**

1908. 9 July Many newspapers fined, and the editor of a  
Sevastopol paper arrested, for printing  
*I Cannot Be Silent.*
- „ Arrest and banishment of Tolstoy's secre-  
tary, N. N. Góusef.
- „ 28 Aug. Jubilee in honour of Tolstoy's 80th  
birthday.
1910. 28 Oct. Leaves home.
- „ 31 „ Ill at Astápovo.
- „ 7 Nov. **Dies at Astápovo.**
- „ 9 „ (=22 Nov., new style). Buried at Yásnaya  
Polyána.



# LIST OF TOLSTOY'S CHIEF WRITINGS SINCE 1877, GIVING APPROXIMATELY THE DATE WHEN EACH WAS FINISHED.

1878

†First Recollections, . . . . *Autobiographical  
fragment.*

1879

†CONFESSION (with addition in 1882) . *Book (spiritual  
autobiography).*

1880

CRITICISM OF DOGMATIC THEOLOGY, . *Book, 2 vols.*

1881

\*Church and State, . . . . *Essay.*

\*WHAT MEN LIVE BY, . . . . *Short story.*

1881-2

UNION AND TRANSLATION OF THE FOUR

GOSPELS, . . . . *Book, 3 vols.*

1882

On the Census, . . . . *Article.*

Letter to N. N. (Engelhardt) . . *Letter.*

1883

THE GOSPEL IN BRIEF, . . . . *Short book.*

1884

WHAT DO I BELIEVE? (My Religion) *Book.*

\*Industry and Idleness (Bóndaref) . *Essay.*

## 1885

- The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles, *Translation.*  
 \*WHERE LOVE IS, GOD IS, . . . *Short story.*  
 \*TWO OLD MEN, . . . . ."  
 \*A SPARK NEGLECTED BURNS THE  
 HOUSE, . . . . ."

## 1886

- †WHAT THEN MUST WE DO? . . . *Book on the pro-  
 blem of poverty.*  
 \*Nicholas Stick (Nicholas I) . . . *Sketch.*  
 THE DEATH OF IVÁN ILYÍTCH, . . . *Story.*  
 \*HOW MUCH LAND DOES A MAN  
 NEED? . . . . . *Short story.*  
 \*Ilyás, . . . . ."  
 \*The Three Hermits, . . . . ."  
 \*THE IMP AND THE CRUST (Temperance) . . . . ."  
 \*The First Distiller, . . . . . *Short play.*  
 \*The Godson, . . . . . *Short story.*  
 The Candle, . . . . ."  
 \*IVÁN THE FOOL, . . . . ."  
 \*THE POWER OF DARKNESS, . . . . . *Drama.*  
 \*A Grain as Big as a Hen's Egg, . . . . . *Short story.*  
 \*The Repentant Sinner, . . . . ."

## 1887

- ON LIFE, . . . . . *Book (philosophical).*  
 What is True in Art, . . . . . *Preface.*  
 Letter on Manual Labour (to M.  
 Romain Rolland) . . . . . *Letter.*  
 \*THE EMPTY DRUM (anti-militarist) . . . *Short story.*

## 1888

- HOLSTOMÉR: THE STORY OF A HORSE  
 (written long before) . . . . . *Story.*  
 Manual Labour and Mental Activity, *Essay.*

## 1889

- CULTURE'S HOLIDAY (12 Jan. : Moscow  
University Anniversary) . . . *Exhortation.*  
THE KREUTZER SONATA, . . . *Sex-story.*  
\*On Ershóf's *Recollections of Sevastopol*, . . . *Preface.*  
\*FRUITS OF CULTURE, . . . *Comedy.*

## 1890

- \*WHY DO MEN STUPEFY THEMSELVES?  
(Temperance) . . . *Essay.*  
\*AFTERWORD TO THE KREUTZER SONATA, *Essay on Sex.*  
Preface to Dr. Alice Stockham's *Tokology*, . . . *Preface.*  
\*Timothy Bóndaref, . . . *Article.*  
Conclusion to Kostomárof's story,  
*Forty Years*, . . . *Fragment.*

## 1891

- \*Too Dear (from G. de Maupassant.  
Published 1897) . . . *Free translation.*  
\*The Coffee-House of Surat (from B.  
de Saint-Pierre) . . . *Free translation.*

## 1891-3

- †On the Famine, . . . *Articles.*

## 1892

- \*THE FIRST STEP, . . . *Vegetarian essay.*  
A Conversation Among Leisured  
People, . . . *Sketch.*  
\*Françoise (from G. de Maupassant) . *Free translation.*

## 1893

- †THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU  
(against war and Government) . *Book.*  
On Amiel, . . . *Preface.*

# LIST OF CHIEF WRITINGS 685

Walk in the Light While There is

Light (written earlier) . . . *Story.*

\*NON-ACTING, . . . . . *Essay.*

\*The Demands of Love, . . . . *From his Diary.*

1894

\*REASON AND RELIGION, . . . . *Essay.*

\*RELIGION AND MORALITY, . . . . "

Christianity and Patriotism, . . . . "

Preface to Semyónof's works, . . . *Preface.*

GUY DE MAUPASSANT, . . . . . "

1895

\*Shame! . . . . . *Essay.*

Preface to Life of Drózhzhin, . . . *Preface.*

MASTER AND MAN, . . . . . *Story.*

1896

PATRIOTISM AND PEACE (to Manson) . *Letter.*

\*On Non-Resistance (to E. H. Crosby) . . . "

\*Letter to Liberals, . . . . . "

\*How to Read the Gospels, . . . . *Short essay.*

The Approach of the End, . . . . *Essay.*

1897

Art and Not-Art, . . . . . *Essay.*

The Christian Teaching, . . . . . *Book.*

Afterword to Help! . . . . . *An Appeal.*

1898

\*WHAT IS ART? . . . . . *Book.*

\*Modern Science, . . . . . *Preface to article  
by Ed. Carpenter.*

\*To a Non-Commissioned Officer, . . *Letter.*

## 1899

- \*Letter on Hague Conference, . . . *Letter.*  
 Two Wars (Spanish-American and  
 Doukhobór), . . . *Essay.*  
 Carthago Delenda Est, . . . *Anti-war essay.*  
 \*RESURRECTION, . . . *Novel.*

## 1900

- \*The Slavery of Our Times (Sequel to  
 What Then Must We Do?), . . . *Book.*  
 \*Thou Shalt not Kill! (on assassina-  
 tion of King Humbert), . . . *Essay.*  
 \*Patriotism and Government, . . . ,,  
 Can This Be Necessary? . . . ,,

## 1901

- The Clockmaker, . . . *Fragment.*  
 \*To the Tsar and his Assistants, . . . *Address.*  
 \*REPLY TO THE SYNOD, . . . *Apologia.*  
 The Only Means (on emancipation  
 from false faith), . . . *Essay.*  
 The Root of the Evil, . . . }  
 How Shall We Escape? (studies pre-  
 liminary to The Slavery of Our  
 Times), . . . } *Essays.*  
 The Approach of the End of the Age, *Essay.*  
 Notes for Soldiers, . . . *Anti-war text-book.*  
 Notes for Officers, . . . ,,

## 1902

- On Religious Toleration, . . . *Article.*  
 †Letter to the Tsar, . . . *Letter.*  
 \*WHAT IS RELIGION? . . . *Long essay.*  
 To the Working People (on the Land  
 Question), . . . *Essay.*  
*Der Büttnerbauer* by Von Polenz, . . . *Introduction.*  
 \*AN APPEAL TO THE CLERGY, . . . *Philippic.*

# LIST OF CHIEF WRITINGS 687

## 1903

- The Restoration of Hell, . . . . *Legend.*  
 \*Esarhaddon, . . . . *Short story.*  
 \*Work, Death, and Sickness, . . . *Legend.*  
 \*Three Questions, . . . . *Short story.*  
 To Social Reformers, . . . . *Appeal.*  
 Afterword to To the Working People, . . . . "

## 1904

- BETHINK YOURSELVES! (on the Japanese war) . . . . *Anti-war essay.*  
 Thoughts of Wise Men, . . . . *Compilation.*

## 1905

- How to Free the Workers, . . . . *Anti-Governmental essay.*  
 The One Thing Needful (on Religious individualism), . . . . *Essay.*  
 A Great Iniquity (on Land-owning),. *Essay.*  
 The Crisis in Russia, . . . . *Anti-Constitutional essay.*  
 The End of the Age, . . . . *Anti-State essay.*  
 \*Kornéy Vasílyef, . . . . *Short story.*  
 \*A Prayer, . . . . . "  
 \*Strawberries, . . . . . "  
 \*Tchéhof's Darling, . . . . *Afterword.*

## 1906

- \*God's Way and Man's (The Divine and the Human). . . . *Short story.*  
 Shakespear and the Drama, . . . *Essay.*  
 \*Why? (What For?) . . . . *Short story.*  
 To the People, . . . . *Exhortation.*  
 On Military Service, . . . . *Essay.*  
 A CIRCLE OF READING, . . . . *Compilation, 2 vols.*

- Our Understanding of Life (partly by Tolstoy), . . . . . *Manifesto.*
- \*The Meaning of the Russian Revolution, . . . . . *Essay.*
- \*What's To be Done? . . . . . "
- \*An Appeal to Russians: To the Government, the Revolutionists and the People, . . . . . *Exhortation.*
- The Only Possible Solution of the Land Question (H. George) . . . . . *Essay.*
- \*Thou Shalt Kill No One! . . . . . "
- \*The Understanding of Life, . . . . . "
- \*A Farewell Address, . . . . . "
- Love One Another, . . . . . "
- Letter to a Chinese, . . . . . *Letter.*

## 1907

- \*Trust Yourself! An Appeal to Young People, . . . . . *Appeal.*

## 1908

- \*I CANNOT BE SILENT (on the Hangings) . . . . . *Protest.*
- \*Against the Arrest of Molótnikof and others, . . . . . *Protest.*
- \*THE TEACHING OF JESUS (for children) *Book.*
- \*The Law of Violence and the Law of Love, . . . . . *Essay.*
- \*The Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, . . . . . "

## 1909

- \*To a Peasant on Science, . . . . . *Letter.*
- \*The Inevitable Revolution, . . . . . *Essay.*
- \*Address to Peace Conference (not delivered), . . . . . *Speech.*

# LIST OF CHIEF WRITINGS 689

- \*The Only Commandment, . . . . *Essay.*
- \*Singing in the Village, . . . . *Sketch.*
- \*Traveller and Peasant, . . . . "
- \*Orlóf's Album, . . . . *Preface.*
- For Every Day, . . . . *Compilation.*

1910

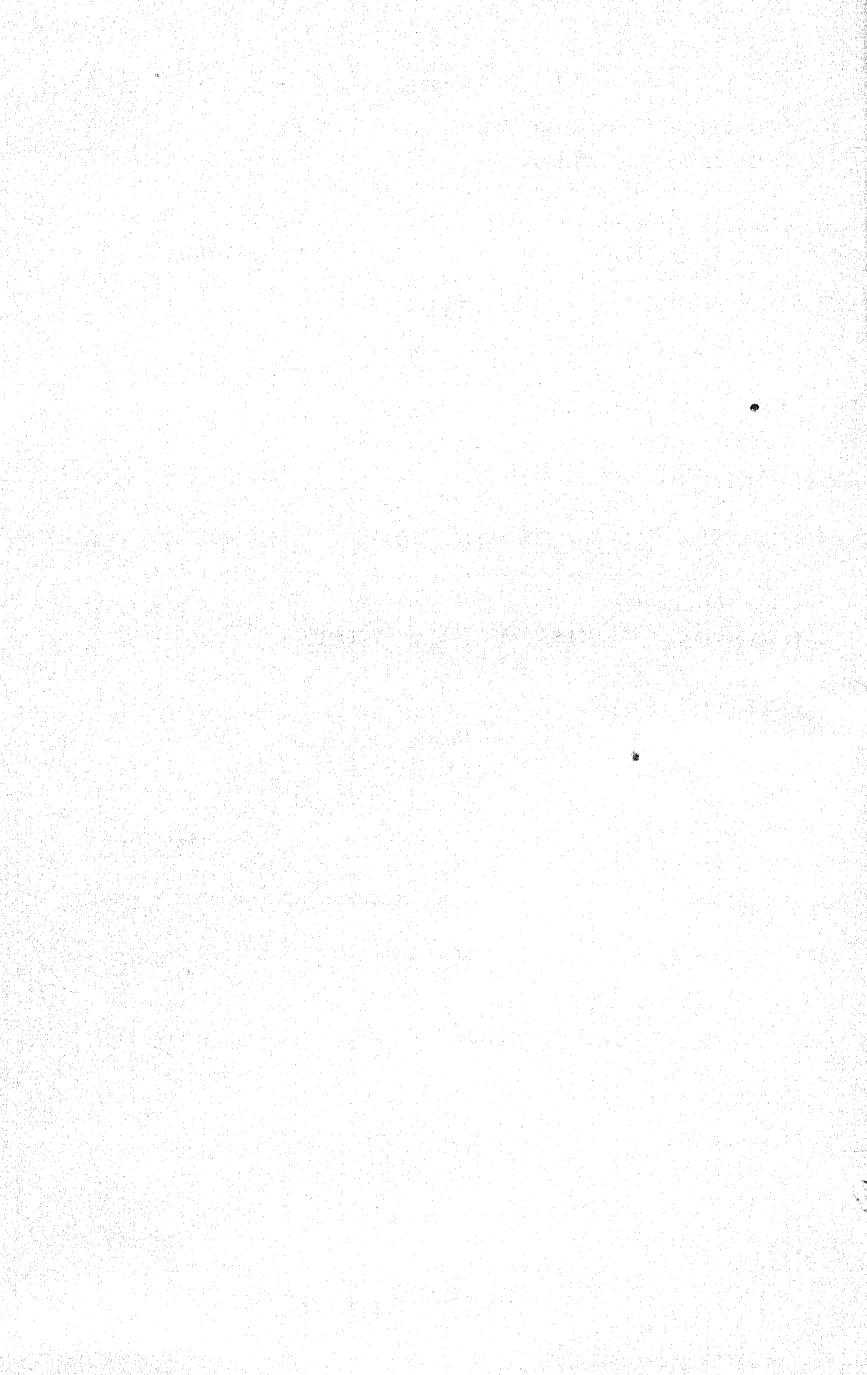
- \*It is Time to Understand, (Genghis Khan), . . . . *Essay.*
- \*First Day in the Village: Tramps, . . *Sketch.*
- \*Second Day in the Village: The Living and the Dying, . . . . "
- \*Third Day in the Village: Taxes, . . . "
- \*Fourth Day in the Village: A Dream, . . "
- \*A Talk with a Wayfarer, . . . . "

## POSTHUMOUS WORKS

- |                    |                               |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| *Hadji-Murat.      | From it all Evil Flows.       |
| The Young Tsar.    | The Light Shines in Darkness. |
| The False Coupon.  | Father Sergius.               |
| After the Ball.    | The History of a Hive.        |
| Notes of a Madman. | What I Dreamt.                |
| Who is Right?      | None are Guilty in the World. |
| Alyósha Gorshók.   | Who is the Murderer?          |
| The Devil.         | The Memoirs of Fyódor Kouz-   |
| The Living Corpse. | mítch.                        |
| Children's Wisdom. | Father Vasíly.                |

Works that have been translated in full by A. or L. Maude are marked \*. Works of which they have translated a part are marked †





## APPENDIX I

### ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF TOLSTOY

THERE are at least two reasons why I should not write about the translations of Tolstoy. One is that I am myself a translator, and may therefore be suspected of bias. The other is, that I have not read a tenth of the translations published in our language, for—after the originals—most of them are very difficult to read.

There are, however, other considerations which outweigh these. The first is, that Tolstoy's works ought to be made more accessible and intelligible to English readers than they now are; and this is not likely to be done unless some one points out what is unsatisfactory in the present editions. The second is, that few people, understanding Russian, writing English, and interested in Tolstoy, are willing to deal with a matter which cannot be dealt with without treading on some corns.

Though, as I have admitted, I have not read nearly all the existing versions, I think I can hardly have overlooked any considerable work really well done in this line; and I will try to speak impartially.

These, then, are my opinions on the matter.

The first English and American editions, including some that are still current, suffered from the fact that the translators were not familiar with Russian life, and their work was often done under pressure from publishers anxious to get a non-copyright book out before any one else could do so. Even then some good versions were made, such as Miss I. Hapgood's *Boyhood, Childhood and Youth*. Among more recent renderings, Mrs. Constance

Garnett's *War and Peace*, *Anna Karénin*, *The Death of Iván Ilyitch*, and *Family Happiness*, deserve honourable mention; and I hope the volumes done by my wife and myself may also pass muster. But nearly half of Tolstoy's works have never yet been put into English which at all adequately represents the spirit of the originals.

To the Free Age Press versions I have already alluded in the course of this book. Some of its volumes clearly lacked the supervision of any one who knew Russian; others were spoilt by an effort to be too literal. English and Russian are such different languages, that a literal rendering of idiomatic and forcible phraseology results in an English version that is only semi-intelligible, and gives the impression that Tolstoy either did not know what he wanted to say, or did not know how to say it.

One cannot help regretting the carelessness with which a book so important as *What is Religion?*, for instance, was presented to English readers. To give only a few palpable instances: on page 15 quotations from Vauvenargues and Bayle are attributed to 'Vovenargue' and 'Beile,' while Chapter VII opens with a paragraph which must perplex any reader who knows that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews never said the things there attributed to him.

Sometimes the translators manage to misunderstand Tolstoy altogether. Take, for instance, the passage which in the Oxford Press edition (*Essays and Letters*, page 320) is correctly given thus:

Tourgénief humorously says that there are such things as 'reversed platitudes,' and that they are often used by people lacking in talent, but desirous of attracting attention. Every one knows, for instance, that water is wet; but suddenly some one seriously asserts that water is dry—not ice but water is dry; and such an opinion, if confidently expressed, attracts attention.

This, the Free Age Press (*What is Religion?*, p. 44) renders as follows:

Tourgénief has humorously said that reversed platitudes are often employed by incapable men to draw attention to them-

selves. For instance, every one knows that water is wet, but suddenly a man with a serious mien says that water is dry, alluding to ice, and such a statement, expressed with assurance, attracts attention.

This strange indifference to the quality of its versions was most unfortunately displayed in the translation of Tolstoy's essay on Shakespear. Whatever his defects may be, Shakespear at least knew how to handle the English language, and his admirers are generally people appreciative of that quality, and not likely to pay much attention to awkwardly expressed criticisms. Yet the Free Age Press represents Tolstoy as attacking him as follows:

And lo! profound critics declare that in this drama, in the person of Hamlet, is expressed a singularly powerful, perfectly novel and deep personality, consisting in this person having no character; and that precisely in this absence of character consists the genius of creating a deeply conceived character.

A library edition of Tolstoy's works was started under my own editorship in 1901, but after three volumes had appeared the publisher failed. The books were then transferred to their present publisher (Constable) and the attempt came to an end.

The most nearly complete edition of works written up to 1902 is the American one prepared by Professor Leo Wiener (issued in England by Messrs. Dent and Co.), but it is very defective in many respects. Its 24 volumes, rapidly produced, abound in errors. The editing is open to much reproach, and the translations hardly suggest that Tolstoy knew how to handle the language in which he wrote. I shall leave readers to judge for themselves whether what I say about the translating is correct; but about the editing I will give a few instances in support of my opinion.

Tolstoy protested against being held responsible for such compilations as *Thoughts on God*, *On the Meaning of Life*, and *The Relation of the Sexes*, which are made up of undated fragments; yet in this edition these collections

are included among his works without any warning (such as was explicitly given in the Free Age Press editions) that they are made up of extracts from diaries, private letters, notebooks, and rough drafts of unfinished writings, not intended for publication; and that 'for the order and sequence in which these scraps are placed,' Tolstoy was not responsible.

But if that inclusion is reprehensible, even more so is the exclusion of the Preface to *What is Art?* in which Tolstoy asks to be judged by the translation he co-operated in preparing. It would, no doubt, have been very awkward for the editor to include that Preface, for 'a completely new translation' had been advertised. But a single instance will suffice to show how unfair to Tolstoy and to the reader was the substitution of an unauthorised version.

A passage in the authorised version which speaks of the interplay which should exist between true science and true art, says:

Art is not a pleasure, a solace, or an amusement; art is a great matter. It is an organ of human life, transmitting man's reasonable perception into feeling. In our age the common religious perception of men is the consciousness of the brotherhood of man: we know that the well-being of man lies in union with his fellow-men. True science should indicate the various methods of applying this consciousness to life. Art should transform this perception into feeling.

This is rendered in Prof. Wiener's translation as follows:

Art is not an enjoyment, a diversion; art is a great thing. Art is an organ of the life of humanity, which transfers the rational consciousness of men into feeling. In our time the common religious consciousness of men is the recognition of the brotherhood of men and of their good in mutual union. True art must indicate the different manners of applying this consciousness to life. Art must transfer this consciousness into feeling.

The substitution of the word *art* for *science*, is no doubt

merely a slip due to extreme haste; but it is a slip which destroys the sense of the passage, and the edition abounds in slips.

In Vol. XVII, we find an 'Introduction to Collected Articles' in which Tolstoy is made to say:

In this volume there are collected, in addition to stories which describe real occurrences, stories, traditions, saws, legends, fables, fairy tales, such as have been composed and written for the good of children.

'We have chosen such as we regard as conforming with Christ's teaching, and so regard as good and true.

This must have puzzled many readers, and it was only by referring to the original that I discovered that this 'Introduction' refers to a Collection of reading matter for children called *The Flower Garden*, and published by the Mediator, and does not refer at all to the contents of Vol. XVII, in which it has been incorporated.

Tolstoy took such pains to make his readers understand him, that it is really a shame to treat his works in such a way; and until we can get a much better edition, it is certain that his works will continue to be practically unknown to large numbers of readers who would appreciate his writings were they properly presented to them.

Publisher after publisher has made the same blunder. They have not realised that the saleability of Tolstoy's works depends on a combination of two things: (1) the translation *must be readable* (and it almost necessarily follows that it should be made by people whose native tongue is English); (2) it must be *recognised as reliable*. It is also desirable that the edition should include—I will not say, all that Tolstoy ever wrote, but—all that he wrote for publication, and that has permanent value.

Again and again editions have been rushed out at a rate which precluded the possibility of obtaining satisfactory renderings. What is wanted is an edition prepared with the care that the works of a classic deserve.

If an edition were arranged which combined the versions I have mentioned as being satisfactory (and which would need but little revision) it would start with more than half Tolstoy's works ready translated. If three or four volumes a year were added, the edition would be completed in three or four years; or, by the co-operation of several workers, it might be done much sooner.

A reliable edition would be a permanently valuable addition to English literature, and would add greatly to Tolstoy's influence.

## APPENDIX II

### TWO GAMES OF CHESS WITH TOLSTOY

GAMES played, as these were, rapidly, amid conversation, and when one of the players had been travelling all the preceding night, cannot have much interest as specimens of good chess. But as showing the kind of skittle game played at the ages of seventy-eight and eighty-one by a great writer who only played when he was too tired to work, they may be worth recording.

In the first game, played in 1906, Tolstoy, who knew nothing of the Chess books, took me quite by surprise by playing the Salvio Gambit. He had, it turned out, picked it up from a friend who had recently played it on him. I knew nothing about that opening, and made a very poor fight of it.

#### SALVIO GAMBIT.

##### *White.*

LEO TOLSTOY.

1. P-K4
2. P-KB4
3. Kt-KB3
4. B-B4
5. Kt-K5
6. K-B sq
7. BxP
8. PxP
9. K-K sq
- 10 P-Q4

##### *Black.*

A. MAUDE.

- P-K4
- PxP
- P-K Kt4
- P-Kt5
- Q-R5+
- P-Q4
- P-B6
- Q-R6+
- P-Kt6
- P-Kt7?



If instead of this, black had played 10. Q-Kt7, he should have won easily.

11. R-Kt sq	Q-R5+?
12. K-K2	Kt-KR3
13. RxP	P-QB3
14. BxKt	PxB
15. BxB	KxB
16. Q-K sq	Q-K2

Being two pawns behind, black dared not exchange queens, and so allowed the entrance of white's queen into the game a couple of moves later, which settled matters at once.

17. Kt-QB3	P-B3?
18. KtxP	Q-Q3
19. Q-Kt3	PxKt
20. Q-Kt7+	K-K sq
21. QxR+ and wins.	

On my next visit, in 1909, the following was one of the games we played :

#### RUY LOPEZ.

##### *White.*

A. MAUDE.

1. P-K4
2. Kt-KB3
3. B-Kt5
4. B-R4
5. B-Kt3

##### *Black.*

LEO TOLSTOY.

- P-K4
- K-QB3
- P-QR3
- P-QKt4
- Kt-KB3?

This is a dangerous move, now that the white bishop is at Kt3.

6. Kt-Kt5	P-Q4
7. PxP	KtxP
8. KtxBP	KxKt
9. Q-B3+	K-K6
10. Kt-B3	QKt-Kt5?

White has already a practically won game, and the only question is, how quickly can he force matters to a conclusion?

- |                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
| 11. P-QR3          | B-Kt2   |
| 12. PxKt           | R-R2?   |
| 13. Q-Kt4+         | K-Q3    |
| 14. Kt-K4+         | K-B3    |
| 15. Q-K6+          | B-Q3    |
| 16. BxKt+          | K-Kt3   |
| 17. BxB            | RxB     |
| 18. P-Q3           | K-R2    |
| 19. B-K3+          | K-Kt sq |
| 20. RxP            | R-K sq  |
| 21. Q-R2           | P-B3    |
| 22. R-R8+          | K-B2    |
| 23. Q-R5+          | K-Q2    |
| 24. RxQ+ and wins. |         |

## APPENDIX III

While writing the last chapters of this book, I received from Tolstoy a reply in Russian to a Japanese who had written to him. This letter Tolstoy asked me to put into English, for though he wrote our language, he did not feel of being able to express in it the exact shades of his meaning. When thanking me for the translation, Tolstoy decided whether I should like to include the letter—which has appeared elsewhere—in this book. I accepted his offer gladly, not only because I welcomed Tolstoy's co-operation in my work, but also because the letter sums up his religious position with great lucidity, and indicates the position in which his attitude towards Government and war stands to the rest of his beliefs. In fact the letter gives, in Tolstoy's own words, the sum of his final religious beliefs.

I received your very interesting letter, and decided at once to answer it fully and fundamentally, but ill-health and other things have, till now, kept me from this, to me, very important letter.

Coming from your mention of your sermon in church, I decide you are a Christian; and as I am aware that several of our teachings are current in your country: Shintoism, Christianity, Taoism, and Buddhism, I conclude that those teachings also are known to you.

Under the supposition that you are acquainted with many religions, it is possible for me to answer your doubts in the most correct manner. My answer will consist in referring you to the eternal truths of religion: not of this or that religion, but to the one appropriate to all mankind, based—not on the

authority of this or that founder: Buddha, Confucius, Lao-Tsze, Christ or Mohammed—but on the indubitable nature of the truth that has been preached by all the great thinkers of the world, and that is now felt in the heart and accepted by the reason of every man who is not confused by false, perverted teachings.

The teaching, expressed by all the great sages of the world, the authors of the Vedas, Confucius, Lao-Tsze, Buddha, Christ, and Mohammed, as well as by the Greek and Roman sages—Marcus Aurelius, Socrates and Epictetus—amounts to this: that the essence of human life is not the body, but is that spiritual element which exists in our bodies, in conditions of time and space, incomprehensible, but of which man is vividly conscious, and which—though the body to which it is bound is continually changing and disintegrates at death—remains independent of time and space, and is therefore unchangeable. So what we call our life (and this is particularly clearly expressed in the real, unperverted teaching of Sakya Muni) is nothing but the ever greater and greater liberation of that spiritual element from the physical conditions in which it is confined, and the ever-increasing union, by means of love, of this spiritual element in oneself with the like spiritual element in other beings, and with that same spiritual element itself—which men call God. In that, I think, consists the true religious teaching, common to all men, on the basis of which I will try to reply to your questions.

The questions you put to me clearly indicate that you do not mean by 'religion' what I consider to be true religious teaching, but that perversion of it, which is the chief source of human errors and sufferings.

And strange as it may seem, I am convinced that religion—the very thing that gives man true welfare—is, in its perverted form, the chief source of man's sufferings.

You write that refusal to perform army-service may occasion loss of liberty or life to the refusers, and that a refusal to pay taxes will produce various materially harmful consequences. And (though it is not given to us men to foresee the consequences of our actions) I will grant that everything would happen as you anticipate; but all the same, none of these

presumed consequences can have any influence on a truly religious man's understanding of the truth, or of his duty.

I quite admit that irreligious people, revolutionists, anarchists or socialists, having a definite material aim in view—the welfare of the majority, as they understand it—cannot acknowledge the reasonableness of refusals to serve in the army or to pay taxes; which in their view, without improving the condition of the majority, can only cause useless sufferings, or even death, to those who refuse. I quite understand that, with reference to irreligious people. But for a religious man, living by the spiritual essence he recognises within himself, it is not so. For such a man there is not and cannot be any question of the consequences (no matter what they may be) of his actions, nor of what will happen to his body and to his temporal physical life. Such a man knows that the life of his body is not his life, and that its course, continuance, or end, do not depend on his will. For such a man, only one thing is important and necessary: to fulfil what is required of him by the spiritual essence that dwells within him. And very definitely in the present case, that spiritual essence demands that he should not participate in actions that are most contrary to love: in murders or in preparation therefor. Very possibly a religious man in a moment of weakness may not feel strong enough to fulfil what is demanded of him by the law he acknowledges as the law of his life; and, weakening, he may not do what he ought. But, without having done what he ought, a religious man will always know where the truth lies, and where, consequently, his duty lies; and if he does not do what he ought, he will know that he is guilty and has acted badly, and will try not to repeat the same sin when next he is tempted. But he will certainly not doubt the possibility of fulfilling the call of the Highest Will, and will in nowise seek to justify his action or to compromise, as you say.

Such a view of life is not only not Utopian—as it may seem to people of your, or of the Christian, nations, who have lost all reasonable religious understanding of life—but is the natural view of life suitable for all mankind.

So that if we were not accustomed to the temporary, almost mad, condition in which all the nations, armed against one

another, now exist—what is now going on in the world would appear an impossible Utopia; but certainly the refusal by every reasonable man to participate in this madness would not seem so.

The condition of darkness in which mankind now exists would indeed be terrible if, in that darkness, people did not appear, more and more frequently, who understand life as it should and must be. There are such people, and they recognise themselves to be free, in spite of all threats and punishments the Authorities can employ; and they do not do what the insensate Authorities demand of them, but what is demanded of them by the highest spiritual essence, which speaks clearly and loud in the conscience of every man.

To my great joy I now, before my death, see every day an ever-increasing number of such people, living not by the body, but by the spirit: who calmly refuse the demands made by those who form the Government, to join them in the ranks of the murderers; and who joyfully accept all the external, bodily tortures inflicted on them for their refusal. There are many such in Russia. Men still quite young, who have been kept for years in the strictest imprisonment, experience the happiest and most tranquil state of mind—as they recount in their letters, or personally to those who see them. I have the happiness to be in close touch with many of them, and to receive letters from them; and if it interests you I could send you some of their letters.

What I have said about refusals to serve in the army relates also to the refusals to pay taxes, about which you write. A religious man may not resist by force those who take any of the fruits of his labour—whether they be private robbers or robbers that are called ‘the Government’; but a religious man cannot of his own accord assist with his property those evidently evil deeds which are carried out with means taken from the people in the guise of taxes.

To your argument about the necessity of protecting by force a victim tortured or slain before your eyes—I will reply with an extract from a book, *For Every Day*, which I have compiled, and in which, from various points of view, I have repeatedly replied to that very objection. This book may, I think, interest

you, as in it are expressed all the fundamental positions of that religion, which—as I began by saying—are one and the same in all the great religious teachings of the world, as well as in the hearts and minds of all men. Here is the extract :

‘It is an astonishing thing that there are people who consider it the business of their lives to correct others. Can it be that these correctors are so good, that they have no work left to do in correcting themselves?’

I will conclude by saying that there is but one means of improving human life in general : the ever-increasing elucidation and realisation of the one religious truth common to all men. And I will at the same time add, that I think the Japanese nation, with its external development, ‘civilisation,’ ‘progress,’ and military power and glory, is at present in the saddest and most dangerous condition, for just that external glitter, and the adoption from depraved Europe of a ‘scientific’ outlook on life, hinders, more than anything else, the manifestation among the Japanese people of that which alone can give it welfare—the recognition of religious truth which is one for all mankind.

The more in detail you answer me, and the more information you give me—especially about the spiritual condition of the Japanese people—the more grateful I shall be to you.

In spite of all external differences,—Your loving brother,  
LEO TOLSTOY.

17 March '10.

YÁSNAYA POLYÁNA.

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